

**PATRONAGE OF LIVERY PLAYERS AND THEIR  
PROPAGANDIST FUNCTION IN TUDOR  
ENGLAND, 1530-80**

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## **DECLARATION**

I declare that this thesis was composed by myself and that the work contained therein is my own, except where explicitly stated otherwise in the text.

*(Juo-Yung Lee)*



## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis is an analysis of the activity of those acting companies wearing royal, noble, or local livery in the pre-Shakespeare period. The work contains two major parts. The first section, scrutinising the patronage of players, tries to rebuild the role of players in the patronage system. Who were the patrons? How did patronage pass from one hand to another? What was the relationship between a livery company and its patron? Can its travelling pattern reflect the sphere of influence of the master? These are the questions to be answered. Propaganda is the major concern of the second part of the thesis. In this section, the propagandist function of players is further investigated. The activity of major companies, including the Bale/Cromwell's, Suffolk's, Bedford's, and Leicester's, is thoroughly surveyed. The thesis concludes with a discussion of the acting business in the last two decades of the sixteenth century, examining whether this was the final phase of itinerant livery players and how these players accommodated themselves in the London Stage. Patronage and propaganda have for long been the concerns of both literary critics and historians. But few studies have ever tried to combine the achievements of the two disciplines into one study. This thesis is an attempt to put the livery acting business back into its historical context, showing that the fluctuations of the profession in the sixteenth century were a product of their particular time. This study is also the first work that is able to provide statistical evidence to verify these long-debated issues.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

<u>APC</u>	J.R. Dasent (ed.), <u>Acts of the Privy Council</u> , 32 vols (London, 1890-1907).
<u>CSPD</u>	Robert Lemon and M.A.E. Green (eds.), <u>Calendar of State Papers, Domestic series, of the Reigns of Edward VI, Mary, Elizabeth, (James I) 1547-1580</u> , 12 vols. with Addenda by M.A.E. Green (London, 1856-72).
<u>CSPF</u>	Joseph Stephenson <i>et al.</i> (eds.), <u>Calendar of State Papers, Foreign, Elizabeth</u> , 23 vols (London, 1863-1950).
<u>CSP, Spanish</u>	G.A. Bergenroth <i>et al.</i> (eds.), <u>Calendar of Letters, Dispatches, and State Papers, Relating to the Negotiations between England and Spain, Preserved in the Archives of Vienna, Brussels, Simancas and Elsewhere</u> , 13 vols. (London, 1862-1916).
<u>CSP, Spanish, Elizabeth</u>	<u>Calendar of Letters and State Papers relating to English affairs, preserved principally in the Archives of Simancas ... Elizabeth</u> , 4 vols. (ed.), Martin A. S. Hume, <i>etc.</i> (London, 1892-99).
<u>CSP, Venetian</u>	Rowden Brown (ed.), <u>Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts Existing in the Archives and Collections of Venice, and in other Libraries of Northern Italy</u> , 9 vols. (London, 1864-98).
<u>DNB</u>	Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee (eds.), <u>Dictionary of National Biography</u> , 63 with supplementary volumes (London, 1885- ).
<u>ES</u>	E.K. Chambers, <u>The Elizabethan Stage</u> , 4 vols. (Oxford, 1923).
<u>HMC</u>	<u>Historical Manuscripts Commission.</u>
<u>L&amp; P, Henry VIII</u>	J. S. Brewer, J. Gairdner, and R.H. Brodie (eds.), <u>Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the reign of Henry VIII. ....</u> , 21 vols. and addenda (London, 1862-1932).
<u>REED</u>	Records of Early English Drama



## Introduction

Players wearing royal, noble, or civic livery were ubiquitous in sixteenth-century England; they, with other forms of performers such as minstrels, bearwards and jugglers, were responsible for providing entertainment. In the first half of the century, these livery performers were mainly household servants: they performed at major holidays and important family occasions, and were given food, clothing, shelter and wages in return. They, like other retained employees, were expected to take orders from the household administrators, and were regulated by household ordinances. When their service was not needed, the players were allowed to tour the country. Household, civic, ecclesiastical, and college accounts show that a large number of acting companies in the livery were travelling all over England every year; they wandered from household to household, and from borough to borough, presenting interludes to entertain the political elite and the public.

Players, however, were not the leading livery performers in the early years of the sixteenth century; their business was overshadowed by other entertainers, such as minstrels. It was not until the 1530s that they finally secured the position as the most important performers on the road. The acting business fluctuated in the following decades. It suffered a serious setback in the mid-1550s, but achieved an unprecedented success in the 1560s. The trade declined slightly in the 1570s, then revitalised in the last two decades of the century, when the London stage gradually settled and prospered.

The activity of livery players has attracted massive attention by both literary

critics and theatre historians in the past twenty years.<sup>1</sup> The pre-Shakespearean plays have been scrutinised fairly thoroughly and the physical conditions of performance thoroughly reconstructed in many aspects. The achievements of these scholars are laudable but nonetheless not entirely adequate, for we cannot fully understand the activity of travelling players merely by detailed textual analysis or by rebuilding their performing conditions. Livery players were products of their specific age; their performance should therefore be restored to its historical context. The fluctuations of the acting business in the sixteenth century suggest that the fortune of the players was closely linked to their time. The 1530s was the decade of Reformation, the mid-1550s the time of Catholic counterattack, and the 1560s the first ten years of Elizabeth's reign, during which intricate political and religious issues were waiting to be settled. To understand the activity of players in the sixteenth century more thoroughly, one therefore has to examine the social, political, and the religious conditions that generated the achievement of the English theatre in the sixteenth century. In this thesis, three major causes that determined the development of the travelling acting business—patronage, the Reformation, and the propagandist campaign—are given thorough investigation to demonstrate that the performance of livery players had close connection with these major issues of the sixteenth century.

### **i. Patronage and Livery Players**

Patronage of livery players was part of the precocious patronage system operated from the court to common households in Tudor England. In an age when no

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<sup>1</sup> For a general survey of recent studies of early English drama, see John D. Cox and David Scott Kastan (eds.), A New History of Early English Drama (New York, 1997).

objective selection procedure was available, patronage provided the most convenient means to recruit servants or officers needed. Suitors, through the recommendation of 'the experienced', were made known to the employer and therefore gained the opportunity to secure the place. As an Elizabethan remarked, 'My good lord, advancement in all worlds [is] obtained by mediation and remembrance of noble friends.'<sup>2</sup> The significance of the patronage system, however, was not confined to its function of selection; it carried important political and financial consequences. In high politics, patronage was indispensable to courtiers. Politically, a minister could consolidate his political influence by insinuating his own men into important positions at Court, or, more specifically under the Tudors, into the Privy Chamber.<sup>3</sup> As Eric Ives points out, no ministers, not even Wolsey, Cromwell, or Burghley, could last long if the granting of honours began to flow through other men's hands;<sup>4</sup> they had to control the flow of patronage as much as possible to maintain their status.

Patronage also had its financial importance; it provided a major source of revenue. The tax system of Tudor government was still very limited; officials were therefore paid comparatively low salaries. According to Joel Hurstfield, in

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<sup>2</sup> W.T. MacCaffrey, 'Place and Patronage in Elizabethan Politics', in Elizabethan Government and Society (eds.), S.T. Bindoff, J. Hurstfield, and C.H. Williams (London, 1961), p.108.

<sup>3</sup> Privy Chamber played an extraordinary important role in Tudor politics. Due to the personal nature of Tudor regime, the monarch was the ultimate policy maker and also dispenser of all patronage; the one that could influence the mind of the Tudor ruler was the one that was influential, and in a sense powerful, in the operation of politics. As the court usually moved from palace to palace, and ministers were frequently absent under such operation the most convenient positions of persuasion were members of king's privy chamber. E.W. Ives has pointed out that, when the king was on progress or on hunting expeditions, he would even leave much of the household behind, but never the privy chamber. Ives, Faction in Tudor England, revised 2nd edition (London, 1986), p.11.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p.10. Ives gives us a good example of Wolsey. He points out that when suitors began to search for the recommendation of the Boleyns to fulfil their expectations, the fall of Wolsey was predictable.

Elizabethan's time, the Lord Chancellor, the highest paid courtier, received about £1,000 a year, the Lord Treasurer £368, the Lord Chief Justice of England £230, the Lord High Admiral £200, and the Master of the Wards £133 6s. 8d.<sup>5</sup> Compared to most country squires of the time, these courtiers were not badly rewarded (most country squires did not received much more than £50 in cash a year, few of them more than £100, and even the greater gentry earned only a few hundred pounds at most). This comparatively decent revenue, however, was not 'decent enough' to pay the high living expenses of courtiers, who needed clothes, ornament, and servants to demonstrate personal magnificence.<sup>6</sup> Edward Stafford, duke of Buckingham, for example, is estimated to have spent £1,500 in 1519 on King Henry VIII's visit to his residence at Penshurst in Kent.<sup>7</sup> William Cecil kept three residences: that in Hertfordshire, Theobalds, was probably the largest secular building in England after Whitehall and Hampton Court Palace, completed in 1585.<sup>8</sup>

Cecil's example clearly indicates that it was difficult for Tudor courtiers to balance their high expenses with their 'modest' salary; they needed a fairly large

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<sup>5</sup> J. Hurstfield, The Queen's Wards: Wardship and Marriage under Elizabeth I (London, 1958), p.268. At the other end of the scale, the Clerk of the Privy Seal received only £5 a year. See *ibid.* MacCaffrey, in his survey of the salaries of Elizabethan royal servants, points out that about 400 royal servants received an annual fee of £20 or more; above half of these received less than £50, 71 between £50 and £100 and 77 between £100 and £200; a tiny minority of about twenty had more than £200, nine of them more than £300. See MacCaffrey, 'Place and Patronage in Elizabethan Politics,' p.111. Cf., Penry Williams, The Tudor Regime (Oxford, 1979), p.96.

<sup>6</sup> MacCaffrey, 'Place and Patronage in Elizabethan Politics,' p.111.

<sup>7</sup> Neil Samman, 'The Progresses of Henry VIII, 1509-1529', in Diarmaid MacCulloch (ed.), The Reign of Henry VIII: Politics, Policy and Piety (London, 1995), p.61. Cf. Carole Rawcliffe, The Staffords, Earls of Stafford and Dukes of Buckingham 1394-1521 (Cambridge, 1978), p.138.

<sup>8</sup> Cecil maintained it as a luxurious mansion for the Queen's frequent visits. During her reign Elizabeth visited there twelve times and each time cost the master a small fortune. A.G.R. Smith, Servant of the Cecils: the Life of Sir Michael Hickes, 1543-1612 (London, 1977), p.36.

amount of extra-official profits to sustain their positions. Patronage provided a convenient way to fulfil their needs; when promoting a client, a patron would usually ask for gifts or cash in return. In Elizabeth's first year, for example, a suitor offered a 1000 marks to Lord North, specifying 500 marks for William Cecil and the rest for North to argue his promotion case. North at the end concluded the case by offering a further 200 marks for Cecil, proposing 200 for the queen's cousin, Francis Knollys, and leaving himself the rest.<sup>9</sup> Revenue from patronage could be very impressive. Cecil, for instance, received about £3,000 from suitors for wardships during the last two and a half years of his life, while his salary as Master of the Court of Wards was only £133 a year and his entire official salary throughout the period was less than £400. And at his death, his gold and silver plate, mainly from gifts made by clients, was worth at least £14,000.<sup>10</sup>

As patronage was so crucial to Tudor courtiers, to secure an incessant flow of suitors, or, to attract as many suitors as possible, became one of their vital tasks. Understandably, not all suitors were well informed of the sophisticated political interactions within the court (many suitors did not know who the really influential figures were); accordingly, patrons had to 'introduce' themselves to the suitors

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<sup>9</sup> Ives, Factions in Tudor England, p.9.

<sup>10</sup> Hurstfield, The Queen's Wards: Wardship and Marriage under Elizabeth I (London, 1958), p.268. Williams, The Tudor Regime, p.96. The practice of taking and giving gratuities was common in Tudor England (Hurstfield even asserted that 'every official in Tudor England, great and small, took gifts'). It is always difficult for historians to judge whether this widely-applied operation an action of corruption. But I think Hurstfield has provided us with a good criterion. According to him, public interest was the standard for political propriety. An official is considered corrupt not because he accepted gifts, but because he promoted clients of second rate for the reward. The action of sacrificing the public to the private interest is defined by Hurstfield as corruption. See his Freedom, Corruption and Government in Elizabethan England (London, 1973), pp.137-196. Cf. Robert Harding, 'Corruption and the Moral Boundaries of Patronage in the Renaissance' in G.F. Lytle and S. Orgel (eds.), Patronage in the Renaissance (Princeton, New Jersey, 1981), pp.47-9.

within the 'patronage market'. Literary patronage was a crucial part of this system. A patron would ask his literary retainers to dedicate works to him in return for sponsorship; and this was an efficient way of promoting his standing and reputation.<sup>11</sup> Drama was a convenient medium to demonstrate one's magnificence. Alistair Fox argues that, 'drama was one of the most important forms of fictive representation throughout the Tudor period.'<sup>12</sup> Scholars of Tudor drama, such as David Bevington, also point out that many dramatic works and theatrical activities during the period were sponsored purposely for this political purpose.<sup>13</sup> Certainly, before the rise of commercial theatres, individuals (mainly the crown and the aristocrats) and corporations were major sponsors of plays and players and many dramatic works were dedicated to or composed for these patrons.<sup>14</sup>

Patronage was not confined to high politics; it was also adopted by territorial

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<sup>11</sup> For instance, having Shakespeare as his protégé, the earl of Southampton attained for himself what he had himself called 'praise and reputation'. See Ives, Faction in Tudor England, p.7.

<sup>12</sup> Fox, Politics and Literature in the Reign of Henry VII and Henry VIII (Oxford, 1989), p.232.

<sup>13</sup> David Bevington has mentioned a theory called 'the political usefulness in the Tudor drama'. See his Tudor Drama and Politics: a critical approach to topical meaning (Cambridge, Mass., 1962), p.2. Sydney Anglo points out that pageants held by Tudor monarchs were produced to advocate the glory of the crown, and hence to reinforce the loyalty of the spectators. Peter Hadorn, following the examples of Anglo, highlights the political meanings conveyed by the production of the Westminster tournament of 1511. Stephen Orgel, analysing the court revels of James I, points out that both the structure of the stage and the theatrical form adopted carried non-theatrical information. Thomas Craik analysed the political implications conveyed by Tudor interludes. See Sydney Anglo, Spectacle, Pageantry and Early Tudor Policy (Oxford, 1969); Stephen Orgel, The Illusion of Power: political theatre in the English Renaissance (Berkeley, 1975); P.T. Hadorn, 'The Westminster Tournament of 1511: a study in Tudor propaganda', Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama, 21 (1992), pp.24-45. T. Craik, 'The Political Interpretation of Two Tudor Interludes: Temperance and Humility and Wealth and Health', Review of English Studies, NS 4 (1953), p.98-108.

<sup>14</sup> *The Interlude of Youth*, for example, was believed to be written for Henry Percy, earl of Northumberland, for his major feast, either Christmas or Shrovetide; while *Hyckescorner* appears to have been performed at Southwark, the residence of Charles Brandon, duke of Suffolk. Ian Lancashire (ed.), Two Tudor Interludes: The Interlude of Youth; Hick Scorer (Manchester, 1980), pp.21-9, 33-4.



nobles and gentry to establish and promote their regional reputation and influence. The Staffords, earls and dukes of Buckingham, for instance, depended not only upon the state of their finances, but also 'their ability to maintain a suitably impressive lifestyle' to maintain their reputation as good lords and leaders of men.<sup>15</sup> The Stanleys, earl of Derby, also dispensed a wide range of patronage to maintain the family's influence in the north-west.<sup>16</sup> Patronage of acting company was part of this application. Comparing the touring of livery players and the patron's sphere of influence, we often find that the two were closely related: the patronised troupe tended to travel to regions with family connections. This is partly because the players, which to some extent represented their master, would remind the public of the existence of the patron's regional authority.<sup>17</sup>

Patronage was an universal application; the network of patronage and service, as G.R. Elton put it, 'extended through the whole of society, the situation between King and suitor being repeated at every level down the scale.'<sup>18</sup> On the one hand, there was continuity between central and local sponsorship. Courtiers in central government often had links with local factions and many of them were active in the

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<sup>15</sup> See Carole Rawcliffe, The Staffords, Earls of Stafford and Dukes of Buckingham 1394-1521 (Cambridge, 1978), pp.1-2. Although the influence of the great majority of noble families, such as the Stanleys (earls of Derby) and the Talbots (earls of Shrewsbury), at court declined significantly under the Tudors, they continued to rule in their 'countries'. The structure of their territorial power—the loyalty and allegiance of the country gentlemen, who, in turn, acted as local magistrates and JPs—once known as 'bastard feudalism'—underwent little change. The earlier practice of retaining may have declined during the course of the century, but the underlying patron-client relationship remained intact.' Simon Adams, 'Faction, Clientage and Party: English Politics, 1550-1603', History Today, 32 (December 1982), p.34.

<sup>16</sup> For more of the Stanley's patronage, see chapter 2.

<sup>17</sup> For more discussions, see chapters 2 and 3.

<sup>18</sup> G.R. Elton, Reform and Reformation: England 1509-1558 (London, 1977), p.25.

region from which they came. For instance, the courtier William Brereton was highly influential in Cheshire. His family led the faction there until 1536, and William himself succeeded his father as the recognised leader of the county in 1530.<sup>19</sup> And Anne Boleyn and Cromwell were strong in Cambridge, the City and Kent in the 1530s, while the conservatives at court were powerful in Oxford, the West and parts of East Anglia.<sup>20</sup> The operation of patronage between the centre and the provinces, to a certain extent, was, as E.W. Ives illustrates, a two-way system: the localities supplied cash and support, while the centre offered honours and offices.<sup>21</sup>

The relationship between central and local authorities, however, was not always harmonious. The two were sometimes competing for their influence over the region and patronage provided an arena for the power struggle. One major achievement of the Tudor monarchs was the centralisation of political power. Great regional magnates used to be influential in central government (as faction leaders or chief ministers). The Tudors purposely altered this political situation. Not only were those noble families, who unfortunately possessed royal blood such as the Staffords, Courtenays, and Poles, excluded from the stage of central politics, but regional magnates such as the Percies also experienced the decline of their family power caused by frequent royal interference.<sup>22</sup> Centralisation was not only demonstrated in

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<sup>19</sup> Ives, Faction in Tudor England, p.9.

<sup>20</sup> David Starkey, 'From Feud to Faction', History Today, 32 (November 1982), p.22.

<sup>21</sup> In Elizabethan Norfolk, for example, each warring factions had its supporters at court; and the Breretons of Malpas, who led the faction dominated Cheshire until 1536, had William Brereton as their representative. See Ives, Faction in Tudor England, pp.9-10.

<sup>22</sup> The Howard family was an exception. See Adams, 'Faction, Clientage and Party, 1550-1603', p.32.



the abatement of the power of regional magnates, it was also shown in the establishment of authorities of the central government over the local ones. The increasing influence of the crown and the subsequent decline of the civic spirit in Canterbury was one good example.<sup>23</sup>

The competition between central and regional authorities was reflected in the patronage of cultural activities. Local festivities, such as the St Thomas procession, rapidly declined in the first half of the sixteenth century; and what filled the vacancy left by the degradation of local entertainment were performances provided by companies sponsored by figures in the central government. In other words, in company with the centralisation of political power, there was a centralisation of cultural patronage going on; courtiers (or royal servants) gradually replaced regional magnates (sometimes competitors to the crown), becoming the major source of regional (cultural) patronage. The transformation of local patronage therefore reveals not only the vacillation of regional great families, but also, and probably more significantly, the triumph of the crown in the competition of securing the control of local patronage (including literary sponsorship) and regional influence.<sup>24</sup>

Patronage of livery players was an important phenomenon in the Tudor period. Its significance is not only in the fact that most of the influential figures of the time, from aristocrats, to local gentry and corporations, were involved in patronage, but also in that livery players worked as mediators connecting the country at a time when there was no mass media available. Great efforts have been made in exploring

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<sup>23</sup> For the Canterbury case, see chapter 3.

<sup>24</sup> For more discussion, see chapter 3.

various aspects of the lives and performance of livery players;<sup>25</sup> however, many factors about their patronage are awaiting further investigation. For example, the identity of many patrons remains obscure. Mary A. Blackstone, Andrew Gurr, and Sally-Beth MacLean are the few scholars who have tried to inspect patrons of livery players.<sup>26</sup> However, their main focus is on the Elizabethan period. Very few patrons of pre-Elizabethan times have been thoroughly scrutinised. If we look at the numbers and percentage of the nobility who ever patronised players, it is surprising to find that such an important part of contemporary patronage has been ignored. This is clearly a large gap in our knowledge which requires filling.

The incentives of patronage are also worthy of further exploration. Like all other branches of literary patronage, the political motive behind patronage of players was indisputable. However, unlike the better-documented example of patronage of playwrights, very little direct evidence can be found from the case of livery players. Blackstone has tried to picture the connection between the travelling routes of livery players and the spheres of political influence of the patrons.<sup>27</sup> MacLean used the patronage of Robert Dudley, earl of Leicester, as an example to illustrate the politics

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<sup>25</sup> For a general understanding of present studies of travelling players, see Cox and Kastan (eds.), A New History of Early English Drama.

<sup>26</sup> Mary A. Blackstone, 'Patrons and Elizabethan Dramatic Companies', The Elizabethan Theatre X, (ed.) C.E. McGee, (Port Credit, 1988), pp.112-132. Andrew Gurr, 'Three Reluctant Patrons and Early Shakespeare', Shakespeare Quarterly, 44:2 (1993), pp.159-174. Sally-Beth MacLean, 'The Politics of Patronage: Dramatic Records in Robert Dudley's Household Books', Shakespeare Quarterly, 44:2 (1993), pp.175-82. Up to now the most convenient and complete reference for patrons of livery players is still the 'patrons lists' of various volumes of the Records of Early English Drama series. For a complete list of the publications, see bibliography.

<sup>27</sup> Mary A. Blackstone, 'Circles Within Circles: Touring Patterns and the Patron's Sphere of Influence.' Paper presented in the seminar 'Entertainers on the Road in Early Modern England' at the annual meeting of the Shakespeare Association of America, 1991.

of patronage. And in a new book, MacLean and Scott McMillin reveal the political motive behind the formation of a royal company, the Queen's Men, in 1583 and the significance of the troupe's touring routes.<sup>28</sup> The efforts of Blackstone, MacLean and McMillin are pioneering, but much more work is waiting to be done. For instance, apart from Blackstone's pioneering study, the touring patterns of most livery companies, which can further verify the incentives of patronage, still require reconstruction.<sup>29</sup> The fluctuations of the acting business in the 1530s, 1560s, and the 1580s also need to be explained. These could have responded to the social and political concerns of the time.<sup>30</sup> The termination of the travelling profession also requires further investigation. Scholars usually attribute the decline of itinerant players<sup>31</sup> to the increasing hostility towards the trade and to the attraction of commercial theatres in London.<sup>32</sup> These factors, however, cannot explain the phenomenon entirely. Livery companies were products of great households. The termination of their business was closely linked to the changes within the system supporting it. The decline of the travelling acting companies therefore could be a

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<sup>28</sup> MacLean, 'The Politics of Patronage', pp.175-182. S. McMillin and S-B. MacLean, The Queen's Men and their Plays (Cambridge, 1998).

<sup>29</sup> In chapters 2, 4, and 5, the touring of five major companies are reconstructed.

<sup>30</sup> See chapters 4, 5, and 6.

<sup>31</sup> Most scholars do not specify travelling players as under patronage. However, as livery players were the most traceable and a major group of the itinerant performers, I believe their conclusion could be applied to the study of livery players here.

<sup>32</sup> For instance, Andrew Gurr has argued that the 'Acte for the punishment of Vocabondes' of 1572 was 'an early step in the progress of the professional players from strolling entertainers, who never performed in the same place twice running, to permanently established repertory companies'. See his The Shakespearean Stage 1574-1642, 3rd edition (Cambridge, 1992), p.27. Cf. Peter Roberts, 'Elizabethan players and minstrels and the legislation of 1572 against retainers and vagabonds', in Anthony Fletcher and Peter Roberts (eds.), Religion, Culture and Society in Early Modern Britain (Cambridge, 1994), pp.29-55.

consequence of either the patron's diminishing intention or the decreasing ability of sponsorship.<sup>33</sup>

## ii. The Reformation Debate

As mentioned earlier, the business of livery players first rose significantly in the 1530s, the decade of the English Reformation. The coincidence suggests that the growth of the acting profession in the decade was closely connected to this religious movement: players might have helped the diffusion of the new teachings. To assess the role of playing companies in the Reformation, a review of the major debates surrounding this religious change—the progress of the movement at the popular level—should first be given, for it provides the context of the acting business.<sup>34</sup>

This scholarly interest can be traced at least to the late 1950s and early 1960s when A.G. Dickens published a collection of his Yorkshire studies<sup>35</sup> and the first edition of The English Reformation (1964).<sup>36</sup> Dickens stressed the role of religious, rather than political, roots in the swift advancement of Protestantism. He argued that on the eve of the Reformation, the higher clergy of the Catholic Church were too

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<sup>33</sup> See chapter 6.

<sup>34</sup> For more detail survey of the debates of the Reformation, see Rosemary O'Day, The Debate on the English Reformation (London, New York, 1986). Also Patrick Collinson, 'The English Reformation, 1945-1995', in Michael Bentley (ed.), Companion to Historiography (London, 1997), pp.336-60. Ronald Hutton, 'Revisionism in Britain', in ibid., pp.383-6.

<sup>35</sup> Dickens, Lollards and Protestants in the Diocese of York, 1509-58 (Oxford, 1959).

<sup>36</sup> Dickens, The English Reformation (London, 1964). Dickens published a revised edition of the book in 1989, in which, he extended his earlier study of the Elizabethan Settlement of 1559 to three chapters. See his The English Reformation, 2nd edn. (London, 1989).

involved in politics while the lower clergymen too poor and uneducated to meet the demands of English people. The Bible-reading Lollard conventicles and the itinerant Lollard evangelists therefore provided the seedbed of Protestantism. Under the Tudors, Lollardy was especially active in those 'Protestant' areas, such as the Chilterns, the city of London, Essex, parts of Kent, Newbury (Berkshire), Coventry, Bristol and the large diocese of York. With this profound tradition of religious dissidence, Dickens believed, Tudor England was well prepared for the arrival of the Reformation. There was thus a rapid religious transformation in Tudor England.<sup>37</sup>

Dickens's study was a watershed in Reformation scholarship. The conventional approach to the subject was to delineate the course of the movement and to investigate the contribution of individual reformers.<sup>38</sup> Dickens was the one who turned the attention of study from central politics to provincial society, using local archives to scrutinise regional religious changes. More recently, Peter Clark has supported Dickens's opinions. In his study of Kent, Clark argues that by skilful application of patronage, Cromwell, with the aid of Archbishop Cranmer, successfully built up a reformist group among the county's governing gentry and in the urban oligarchies. The changes in the formulae of wills and the political appearance of the town authorities show that the triumph of the Protestant cause had been achieved in Kent by the mid-1540s.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Dickens, Lollards and Protestants in the Diocese of York. And The English Reformation. Cf. C. Haigh, 'The Recent Historiography of the English Reformation', in Haigh (ed.), The English Reformation Revised (Cambridge, 1987), pp.21-2.

<sup>38</sup> A.F. Pollard and G.R. Elton are the two primary scholars in the 'pre-Dickens' Reformation studies. But as Rosemary O'Day put it, Pollard and Elton, instead of considering themselves as religious historians, 'would not wish to be classified as anything other than political or administrative historians.' See O'Day, The Debate on the English Reformation, p.132.

<sup>39</sup> P. Clark, English Provincial Society from the Reformation to the Revolution: Religion, Politics and

The Dickensian opinion of a 'rapid Reformation from above' was challenged by the so-called 'revisionist' historians in the mid-1970s. These scholars argued that the English people were attached to the Catholic faith on the eve of the Reformation; that religious reform was imposed from above; its implementations were frequently restricted and delayed; and the conversion of the populace to the new religion was slow and had achieved little in many areas by the reign of Elizabeth. Christopher Haigh, in particular, argued that Dickens's conclusion is based upon his own study of Yorkshire and gains support from other local studies of areas with stronger Lollard tradition or Protestant influence, but that it cannot be applied to many other corners of the country. Haigh takes Lancashire as an example, arguing that due to official weakness and local resistance, religious change in the county was seriously obstructed.<sup>40</sup> Haigh develops his argument for other parts of the country, suggesting that while Protestantism did make early progress in towns such as Bristol, Colchester, Coventry, Ipswich and London, the conversion came much later in most remaining areas, especially in the countryside. In Cambridgeshire, Cornwall, Gloucestershire, Lancashire, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Sussex, and Yorkshire, for example, the Protestant Reformation was an event of the Elizabethan (and often the mid-Elizabethan) period.<sup>41</sup> Haigh's theory is bolstered by a group of scholars of

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Society in Kent, 1500-1640 (Hassocks, 1977), pp.34-68. Cf. C. Haigh, 'The Recent Historiography of the English Reformation', p.20.

<sup>40</sup> C. Haigh, Reformation and Resistance in Tudor Lancashire (Cambridge, 1975).

<sup>41</sup> C. Haigh, 'The Church of England, the Catholics and the People,' in Peter Marshall (ed.), The Impact of the English Reformation 1500-1640 (London, 1997), pp.235-6. The article is first published in Haigh (ed.), The Reign of Elizabeth I (Basingstoke, 1984). For more of Haigh's opinions, see his 'The Recent Historiography of the English Reformation', pp.19-33. In 1993, Haigh published a general survey, which, though modifying some of his earlier statements, maintains the overall argument. See his English Reformations: Religion, Politics, and Society under the Tudors (Oxford, 1993).

the 'slow Reformation school.' At the very beginning of his book of Reformation study, J.J. Scarisbrick clearly announces his position: 'on the whole, English men and women did not want the Reformation and most of them were slow to accept it when it came.' He surveys the whole Reformation period up to 1570, arguing that the Catholic Church was popular and the acceptance of the new faith was slow and reluctant.<sup>42</sup>

The major disagreement between the Dickens and the Haigh schools is over the advancement of Protestantism. Regional religious studies have been carried out to settle the argument, in which historians try to answer questions such as: how far was the policy of the government executed in the provinces? Did the advancement of the movement vary from place to place? Was there a groundswell of committed Protestantism in Tudor England preparing for the religious movement? Did Henrician Reformation undergo a change from Catholicism to Protestantism? And was the faith of the statute book successfully translated into conviction at the local level? These are the questions which have recently concerned scholars such as Roger Manning, Margaret Bowker, M.J. Kitch, Robert Whiting, Susan Brigden, M.C. Skeeters, Eamon Duffy, and Caroline J. Litzenberger.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> J.J. Scarisbrick, The Reformation and the English People (Oxford, 1984). For the quotation see p.1.

<sup>43</sup> See Manning, Religion and Society in Elizabethan Sussex (Leicester, 1969); Bowker, The Henrician Reformation: The diocese of Lincoln under John Longland, 1521-1547 (Cambridge, 1981); M.J. Kitch, 'The Reformation in Sussex', in M.J. Kitch (ed.), Studies in Sussex Church History (Sussex, 1981), pp.77-98; Whiting, "'For the health of my soul": prayers for the dead in the Tudor south-west,' in Peter Marshall (ed.), The Impact of the English Reformation 1500-1640, pp.121-42. This article is first published in Southern History, 5 (1983); Brigden, London and the Reformation (Oxford, 1991); and Duffy, The Stripping of the Altars: traditional religion in England 1400-1580 (New Haven, London, 1992); Skeeters, Community and Clergy: Bristol and the Reformation c.1530-c.1570 (Oxford, 1993); Litzenberger, The English Reformation and the Laity: Gloucestershire, 1540-1580 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997). The most recent collection of articles on regional studies is Patrick Collinson and John Craig (eds.), The Reformation in English Towns, 1500-1640 (Basingstoke, 1998).



Manning's study of Sussex, although published earlier than Haigh's work, is basically in accordance with the revisionist view of slow reformation. In his study of the county in the Elizabethan period, Manning points out that, as social conservatism was strong in this rural county, religious enforcement was difficult. During the process of transformation, the government and the local governors agreed to give social stability the first priority; the transfer of social power from the Catholic nobility and gentry to the new Protestant aristocracy in Sussex therefore was accomplished in stages and spread over twenty-five years.<sup>44</sup>

One major argument in the Dickens view of the Reformation is that the services provided by the English Catholic could not fulfil the rising demand for a more personal involvement in religion. This assumption is challenged by Bowker's study of the diocese of Lincoln. According to Bowker, on the eve of Reformation, parish clergy were not negligent, immoral and poor-educated as the contemporary printed propaganda asserted. On the contrary, the church courts were 'honest, speedy and cheap' by sixteenth-century standards, fulfilling social needs in the resolution of disputes. The ecclesiastical authorities received remarkably few complains from their parishioners.<sup>45</sup> One significance of Bowker's study is that although the pre-Reformation diocese of Lincoln was relatively well administered, and had strong Lollard influences, the advancement of Protestantism in the diocese was not early

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<sup>44</sup> Manning, Religion and Society in Elizabethan Sussex.

<sup>45</sup> Bowker, The Henrician Reformation. See also her 'The Henrician Reformation and the Parish Clergy', in C. Haigh (ed.), The English Reformation Revised (Cambridge, 1987), pp.75-93. Bowker's argument is further supported by Christopher Harper-Bill. See his 'Dean Colet's Convocation Sermon and the Pre-Reformation Church in England', in Peter Marshall (ed.), The Impact of the English Reformation 1500-1640, pp.17-37. This article is first published in History, 73 (1988).



and smooth; on the contrary, the clergy and laity showed little inclination to the new religion until the late 1540s, and effective conversion did not come until the reign of Elizabeth.<sup>46</sup>

Kitch agrees with the revisionist point of view that religious changes under the Tudors, both Catholic and Protestant, were 'imposed from above and enforced by secular and ecclesiastical powers working together.' In his study of Sussex, however, he is reserved about the extent and significance of popular support from below in promoting Protestantism. He points out that both Catholicism and Protestantism gained popular support, and if Mary's Catholic policies had continued, a permanent restoration of the old faith and a total extinction of English Protestantism were not unfeasible.<sup>47</sup>

Whiting recognises that most local Reformation studies have concentrated upon the clergy and the gentry, while the mass of the population has been neglected. His study of the south-western peninsula, consisting of Devon, Cornwall, and the diocese of Exeter, focuses specifically upon the laity below the level of the gentry. Whiting argues that Catholicism was popular in the south-west on the eve of the Reformation. But due to the passivity and conformity of the parishioners, the powerful Tudor state was able to erase the long-established Catholic ceremonies in the area. This however did not mean that the new religion has replaced the old successfully. On the contrary, Whiting concludes that for most of the populace, the

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<sup>46</sup> Bowker however is cautious in her conclusion, for she is well recognised the shortage of existing records which could support her to make further statement. Bowker, The Henrician Reformation. Cf. O'Day, The Debate on the English Reformation, p.151.

<sup>47</sup> M.J. Kitch, 'The Reformation in Sussex'.

Reformation was 'less a conversion from Catholicism to Protestantism than a transition from religious commitment to religious passivity or even indifference.'<sup>48</sup>

In other case study, Brigden has undertaken a detailed analysis of London, the 'common country of all England.'<sup>49</sup> In essence, she follows Haigh's line that the Reformation, even in the capital, was 'imposed' by the monarch upon the 'unknowing' and 'unwilling' people. She points out that, despite the great distinctions of wealth and status, Londoners, before the Reformation, were bound by one common faith, Catholicism. The religious movement, however, divided the citizens; for the first time, they were forced to choose 'between true and false images, between free will and predestination, between private faith and public conformity.'<sup>50</sup> Brigden's study tries to establish, from a more social and economic perspective, how different city social groups made their choices and what the consequences of their decisions were.<sup>51</sup>

Skeeters emphasises the different reactions of urban and rural areas to the Reformation. She chooses Bristol as her example, arguing that the movement

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<sup>48</sup> Whiting, 'For the health of my soul', pp.121-42. See also his The Blind Devotion of the People: Popular Religion and the English Reformation (Cambridge, 1989). His most recent book, Local Responses to the English Reformation (London, 1998), is a detailed examination of the issues surrounding the impact of the Reformation of the everyday lives of Tudor people.

<sup>49</sup> Brigden, London and the Reformation, p.2.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., pp.4-5.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.. See also her 'Youth and the English Reformation' in Peter Marshall (ed.), The Impact of the English Reformation 1500-1640, pp.55-85. This article is first printed in Past and Present, 95 (1982), pp.37-67. Brigden's study on London youth is a good example. She successfully argues that London youth were attracted to the new religion not because of their 'feebleness in faith' (as the Catholic church put it), but because of the economic and social difficulties they have suffered from the deterioration of their status in London.

brought dramatic changes 'in the city's ecclesiastical institutions, in the numbers and character of its clergy, and in relationships between clergy and laity.'<sup>52</sup> Eamon Duffy is the most recent ardent revisionist historian. He argues the late medieval Catholic church was far from deficient and decayed. On the contrary, there was a strong and vigorous tradition of the old faith, and the Reformation represented a violent rupture of this popular and respectable religious establishment.<sup>53</sup> Litzenberger chooses Gloucestershire as her subject; she examines the effect of the religious movement on lay religions from 1540 to 1580 through an investigation of individuals and parishes in the county. Rather than focusing on either the acceptance of Protestantism or the demise of the traditional Catholic religion, Litzenberger puts all shades of belief into consideration, showing that the religion of the laity was diverse and complex; parishes and individuals expressed their faith in ways which reflected the institutional and personal nature of their piety.<sup>54</sup>

Before there can be any conclusion of the debate, there are two points which need to be considered. The first one concerns the extent of regional influence upon the history of the nation, a notion addressed by Dickens in an article of 1987 defending his thesis.<sup>55</sup> In this discussion Dickens points out that although there is territorial diversity in the advancement of Protestantism and more careful study of regional contrasts should be taken before any general conclusion is made, one should

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<sup>52</sup> Skeeters, Community and Clergy: Bristol and the Reformation c.1530-c.1570.

<sup>53</sup> Duffy, The Stripping of the Altars.

<sup>54</sup> Litzenberger, The English Reformation and the Laity.

<sup>55</sup> A.G. Dickens, 'The Early Expansion of Protestantism in England, 1520-1558', in Peter Marshall (ed.), The Impact of the English Reformation 1500-1640, pp.85-116. This article is first published in Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte, 78 (1987).

not forget that 'the regions of England were not of equal influence upon the history of nation.' The seat of government was not in Lancashire, while the economic centre was not in Wales. The heartland of the early Protestant movement, besides London, embraced the whole coastal counties from Norfolk to Sussex, and had sizeable westward extensions, and these areas were the centres, economically and politically, of the whole country.<sup>56</sup>

Dickens's argument is a powerful counteraction to the revisionist school, which has dominated almost all Reformation studies since the 1970s. Indeed, if, as revisionist historians have shown, most Tudor people were satisfied with and remained faithful to the old religion, and if, in terms of geographical area, most regions of Tudor England were still attached to Catholicism, one can hardly explain why Tudor monarchs, no matter how powerful, would have adopted a policy evidently against the wills of most subjects. Nor was it clear how Protestantism, a faith ignored (if not disliked) by most people and unknown in most areas, could have triumphed in the country by the end of the Tudor regime, if not earlier. The only reasonable explanation to these questions is that Protestant adherents were much more powerful and influential in the kingdom than their Catholic counterparts; they were therefore able to lobby their opinions in central government, and to get their policies implemented in the corners of the realm. Thus, territorial diversity is an important consideration that should not be ignored when picturing the advancement of the Reformation. Only by considering the diversity of regional influence can a more satisfying explanation of the final success of Protestantism in England be given.

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<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.87-8.

The second reflection on these Reformation studies is the possible religious variety within a single county. Most Reformation regional studies focus on one area, trying to make general conclusions about the religious affiliations of the region. But even in the same county, different religious opinions often coexisted. Margaret Spufford's study of Cambridgeshire is a good example. She carefully surveys the economy, social structure, opportunities for elementary education, and religious beliefs of three villages in the county and finds that while Willingham fermented strong Protestant affiliation, Dry Drayton remained resistant to the new religion throughout the sixteenth century.<sup>57</sup> In other words, regional variance did exist in the same county and should not be ignored.

After a long debate over the past few decades, historians of both schools generally reach certain agreements: despite the success of Protestantism in high politics, popular support for both the old religion and the new varied greatly across the country. There was considerable regional and local variation in the advancement of the new faith, and even in the areas of most obvious Protestant success, there was significant Catholic resistance. If we review the regional Reformation studies of the past few decades, we will find that there is one major question that most historians try to answer: what were the factors that determined the religious attitudes of a region? Or, to put the question in another form, can we find some common causes that influenced the quick or slow acceptance of Protestantism in an area? Most historians try to answer the question by studying the implementation of the Reformation policy in an area; they check the specific regional religious tradition, the

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<sup>57</sup> M. Spufford, Contrasting Communities (Cambridge, 1974).

administrative features, the structure of the local elite, and even the education system of the locality. But religious faith is based upon individual choice; and as G.R. Elton remarks, 'if the puzzled nation of England was to accept Henry VIII's new order', it would have to, not only to be asked to obey, but also 'to be told what truth was now proclaimed and why.'<sup>58</sup> The official Reformation in the institutions is more perceivable and feasible; the conversion of the populace by contrast is much less transparent. Much less attention is given by Reformation historians to the reception of the faith and factors influencing that reception of people. Along with the formal enforcement of reform from above, an effort of conversion from below was carried on. Propaganda played a crucial role in this popular reformation, and it demands further discussion.

### **iii. Propaganda and Livery Players**

The Reformation period was the first age of mass propaganda in Britain. Although using propaganda to promote certain favoured opinions had long been adopted by the powerful,<sup>59</sup> it was under the Tudors that the influence of propaganda was emphasised and a full-scale campaign to disseminate Reformation ideas was carried out. As Kitch points out, religious changes under the Tudors were 'backed up by an extensive propaganda campaign in sermons and officially sponsored pamphlets.'<sup>60</sup> R. W.

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<sup>58</sup> G.R. Elton, Policy and Police: the enforcement of the Reformation in the age of Thomas Cromwell (Cambridge, 1972), p.171.

<sup>59</sup> See for instance Charles Ross, 'Rumour, Propaganda and Popular Opinion During the Wars of the Roses', in Ralph A. Griffiths (ed.), Patronage, the Crown and the Provinces in Later Medieval England (Gloucester Atlantic Highlands, N.J, 1981).

<sup>60</sup> Kitch, 'The Reformation in Sussex', p.78.

Scribner, in his study of the German Reformation, gives us a vivid example of how one Hans Häberlin, a peasant from the village of Wiggensbach, near Kempten, acquired his knowledge of the new religion.

‘He went to hear sermons from the evangelical preachers in Memmingen and Kempten, and in consequence purchased a copy of the New Testament, which he tried to read himself at home.’

Scribner concludes that Häberlin ‘seems typical of how our conventional wisdom understands Reformation ideas to have spread. After hearing a sermon, he went off to read the Bible for himself, to imbibe the printed Word.’<sup>61</sup> Certainly, preaching and printing were the two major forms of Reformation propaganda.<sup>62</sup>

The importance of preaching was emphasised by Protestant reformers. They believed that the core of Christianity was the Word; namely, the teachings of Jesus. The prime function of the ministry was to proclaim God’s Word. Sermons therefore took the central position in church services of the new religion, contrary to the ritual-originated Catholic mass. Hugh Latimer was one of the most influential preacher of the early Reformation. His career reached its peak under Edward VI, and he died as a martyr under Mary. William Cecil, who also realised the importance of preaching, did not wait long after Elizabeth ascended to the throne, ‘drawing up lists of preachers having the strongest personal reasons for loyalty to the new regime’ to be

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<sup>61</sup> R.W. Scribner, ‘Oral Culture and the Transmission of Reformation Ideas’, in Helga Robinson-Hammerstein (ed.), The Transmission of Ideas in the Lutheran Reformation (Dublin, 1989), p.83. This article is previously published, in a slightly different version, as ‘Oral Culture and the Diffusion of Reformation Ideas’, History of European Ideas, 5 (1984), pp.237-256.

<sup>62</sup> In fact, one of the two major historiographical debates over the German Reformation is ‘whether the Reformation message is propagated through print or preaching.’ See Edwards, Mark U., Jr., Printing, Propaganda, and Martin Luther (Berkeley, London, 1994), p.3.



called to address the people at Paul's Cross.<sup>63</sup>

Similar to preaching, printing also has for long been considered as significant in transmitting Reformation ideas. The prevalence of printing during the Reformation era on the continent was certainly impressive. Within a few years of the actual invention in Germany, presses were founded near the University of Paris. By the year 1500, there were 181 Parisian print shops and 95 in Lyon.<sup>64</sup> One major historiographical debate of the German Reformation is over the history of printing and its role in the Reformation.<sup>65</sup> Scholars such as Dickens, Louis Holborn, and Elizabeth L. Eisenstein argue that the Reformation may be justly characterised as a 'print event': 'without printing, no Reformation'.<sup>66</sup> More recently, Mark U. Edwards, in his study of Luther as a publicist, also emphasises the significance of printing. He argues that 'the medium of printing was used for the first time in Western history to channel a "mass" movement to affect change concerning this institution'; it was used 'to reach an audience far larger than any previous movement reached and one that could not have been reached as quickly and as effectively before printing's

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<sup>63</sup> Nancy L. Roelker, 'The Impact of the Reformation Era on Communication and Propaganda', in Harol D. Lasswell, Daniel Lerner, and Hans Speier (eds.), Propaganda and Communication in World History II: Emergence of Public Opinion in the West (Honolulu, 1980), pp.50-2. Roelker's article is a good overview of the roles of communication and propaganda in the Reformation era. Cf. Scribner's For the Sake of Simple Folk: Popular Propaganda for the German Reformation (Oxford, 1994).

<sup>64</sup> Roelker, ibid., p.57. Roelker has pointed out the important of the role of the printer. She remarks that printers 'operated at the core of every heretical movement, scarcely less central than the religious leader themselves and largely responsible for the range and impact of the latter's influence.' She also argues that printing was usually a family business, and this marked generational continuity reinforced the ideological commitment. In other words, printers were much more than technicians; their influence in shaping public opinions should never be underestimated. For more about the growth of printing business in the continent during the period, see ibid., pp.57-8.

<sup>65</sup> One of the best recent discussions of the role of printing in promoting Luther Reformation is Edwards, Printing, Propaganda, and Martin Luther.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p.2. 'Printing' in the reference of earlier studies means 'printing of written word' only.



invention.<sup>67</sup>

Printing played the same important role in the English Reformation. From the 1530s through the Puritan revolution of the mid-seventeenth century, the publishing of devotional works continued in ever-increasing volume and embraced every religious current.<sup>68</sup> In fact, due to an extensive and efficient network of sympathisers both in England and abroad who risked their lives to transmit the manuscripts and the resulting books, Protestant leaders, even in prison, were able to secure the publication of their works in Protestant continental cities like Strasbourg, Frankfurt, and Geneva.<sup>69</sup> Emphasis on the role of printed propaganda has been given in English Reformation studies. G.R. Elton was one of the most important historians in this respect. In contrast to scholars, such as Philip Hughes, J.J. Scarisbrick, Gordon Zeeveld, who are more interested in the arguments within the polemical details, Elton focused on the role played by the propaganda campaign in promoting the enforcing the government's policy.<sup>70</sup> He mentions two important notions in studying the printed propagandist campaign. Firstly, although the government (mainly that of Henry VIII and Cromwell in the earliest stage) was well aware of the ability of print to reach the people, and managed to prevent the publication of positively hostile

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<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, xi.

<sup>68</sup> One piece of evidence of the activity of the printing industry in England is the establishment of the Company of Stationers in 1557 by the Crown. From then on, the London book trade was organised; while certain privileges were granted to its members, the government also imposed regulations and claimed a share of the profits. See Roelker, 'The Impact of the Reformation Era', p.62.

<sup>69</sup> Nicholas Ridley is one example. He was bishop of London, imprisoned in the Tower at the height of the Marian persecutions. Roelker, *ibid.*, p.60. Geneva was the spiritual home of English dissenters. From the Genevan press came the flood of publications that sustained the reform movements in most Protestant areas, such as France, Scotland, and the Netherlands. See, *ibid.*, p.61.

<sup>70</sup> Elton, *Policy and Police*, p.171.

writing,<sup>71</sup> not everything written in favour of the official policy was connected with governmental sponsorship. And secondly, the propaganda campaign consisted not only of writing books and pamphlets, but also of 'publishing' them as well. In other words, the role of publishers in the campaign should not be neglected.<sup>72</sup> Elton's study is focused on two kinds of printed works: those specially known to be under governmental sponsorship, and those published by the King's printer, Thomas Berthelet.<sup>73</sup> More than analysing individual polemic works, Elton tries to describe chronologically the propagandist campaign in the Tudor courts, and to provide us with the political context behind the contest.<sup>74</sup>

Following Elton's example, many later scholars have investigated Reformation polemics, including David Birch and Louis Schuster. Both Birch and Schuster are interested in the polemical campaign between Thomas More and William Tyndale initiated in the 1520s. Birch analyses the polemic writings of More, and Schuster points out that although the difference between the two parties was not that significant in the beginning, the polemical process uprooted the complementary or co-inherent principles, inviting the polarisation of the positions of both.<sup>75</sup> Virginia Murphy studies propaganda literature of Henry VIII's first divorce and tends to follow Elton's approach, being more interested in the 'context' than the 'text' of the

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<sup>71</sup> For instance, Thomas Abell, Queen Catherine of Aragon's chaplain, was imprisoned to the Tower after writing a book, *Invicta Veritas*, in defence of his mistress. See *ibid.*, p.175.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.171-2.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p.173.

<sup>74</sup> See *ibid.*, especially chapter 4.

<sup>75</sup> David Birch, *Early Reformation English Polemics* (Austria, 1983). Louis A. Schuster, 'Reformation Polemic and Renaissance Values', *Moreana*, 11:3 (November, 1974), pp.47-54.

propaganda. In her case study, Murphy charts the development of this polemical campaign from 1527 to the mid-1530s, when the direction of the debate was overtaken by the need to justify the break with Rome. She believes that from 1527 onwards, many treatises produced on Henry's behalf were in fact written by the king himself. It is therefore possible for us to trace the evolution of Henry's thinking through an analysis of the polemics.<sup>76</sup>

Apart from printing and preaching, theatrical performance, especially in England where drama had a long tradition in popular culture, also provided an important way to promote Protestantism. The potential of drama was noted by Protestant ministers. Richard Morison, one of Cromwell's leading pamphleteers, remarked in the 1530s that, 'into the commen people thynges sooner enter by the eies, then by the eares: remembryng more better that they see then that they heere';<sup>77</sup> popular drama could be a more efficient vehicle in disseminating and controlling ideology.<sup>78</sup> In the earlier stage of the Reformation visual and oral media were certainly more powerful. Studying these not-written forms of media is therefore important in our understanding of the spreading of the Reformation.

Scribner's study of popular propaganda for the German Reformation is a good example; he shows that, to the illiterate and semi-literate 'simple' folk, the

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<sup>76</sup> V. Murphy, 'The Literature and Propaganda of Henry VIII's First Divorce', in Diarmaid MacCulloch (ed.), *The Reign of Henry VIII: Politics, Policy and Piety* (London, 1995), pp.135-58.

<sup>77</sup> Sydney Anglo, 'An Early Tudor Programme for Plays and Other Demonstrations against the Pope,' *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 20 (1957), p.179.

<sup>78</sup> For more thorough discussion on Morison's career, see W.G. Zeevald, *Foundation of Tudor Policy* (Cambridge, Mass., 1948).

Reformation message was enforced not mainly by printed word but by powerful visual propaganda.<sup>79</sup> At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the German woodcut, alongside and in conjunction with printing, reached the peak of its artistic development. It was used in book titlepages 'to entice readers to buy', or as a book illustration 'to reinforce the messages of the printed word.' It provided the prominent visual forms of communication: picture books, comic strips and the single page broadsheet. The woodcut picture was a powerful form of propaganda to the illiterate. With the help of the printed explanation, which required only simple reading skills, the messages of the picture can be conveyed directly, clearly, and 'luridly'.<sup>80</sup>

Unfortunately, Scribner's approach in studying German visual propaganda can not be applied to the English case directly. There is vast corpus of visual prints, such as illustrated broadsheets, picture books, title pages, and book illustrations, still surviving in scattered locations across Germany. There is no such abundant evidence available for the English Reformation, especially in its earlier phase. Tessa Watt, inspired by Scribner's attempt, investigated the broadsides produced after 1550. She assesses the peddling of cheap print to study the dissemination of Protestant ideas, and investigates the interweaving of the printed word with contemporary oral and visual culture.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Scribner points out that in the Reformation Germany, literacy was extensive only in towns, while reading ability was very much mixed, in many cases consisting merely of the ability 'to stumble uneasily through a few lines.' See his 'Popular Propaganda for the German Reformation', History Today, 32 (October. 1982), p.10.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., p.10. For Scribner's study, see ibid., pp.10-15. and his For the Sake of Simple Folk. The latter was first published by Cambridge University Press in 1981. In this 1991 paperback edition, Scribner updated it with an introduction and an additional concluding chapter.

<sup>81</sup> T. Watt, Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550-1640 (Cambridge, 1991).

Besides visual prints, oral communication was an indispensable way of transmitting Reformation ideas. As Roelker points out, 'since many people could not read and hand-written materials were always scarce and expensive, communication in earlier centuries had been primarily oral,' and this continued to be the case in the sixteenth century. Preaching and teaching were two important forms of oral communication. However, many opinions of the mass and the clergy, very possibly inaccurate in many cases, were in fact transmitted through 'scurrilous or obscene jokes', and 'irreverent popular songs'. As Henry VIII's proclamation to Parliament in 1545 showed, 'The most priceless jewel, the Word of God, is disputed, rhymed, sung and jangled in every alehouse and tavern.'<sup>82</sup>

Adam Fox is one of the few historians to have paid attention to the significant role of oral circulation. In his study of the formation of popular opinion, Fox points out that 'despite inferior access to the organs of news in script and print, humble men and women in the provinces could be surprisingly well informed.'<sup>83</sup> He hence further investigates the networks of communication that informed the humble but far from 'ignorant' multitude, and scrutinises those oral means, such as songs, ballads, and rhymes, employed in spreading news, propaganda and polemic.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Roelker, 'The Impact of the Reformation Era', pp.50, 56.

<sup>83</sup> A. Fox, 'Rumour, News and Popular Political Opinion in Elizabethan and Early Stuart England,' Historical Journal, 40:3 (1997), p.598.

<sup>84</sup> I would like to thank Dr Fox for his kindness of giving me the chance to consult his unpublished writing on oral circulation, which will be part of his coming book. For more of Fox's discussion of oral communication, see also his 'Ballads, Libels and Popular Ridicule in Jacobean England,' Past and Present, no.145 (1994), pp.47-83.

One interesting point in both Watt's and Fox's studies is that although they are interested in the oral and visual forms of communication, they do not ignore the significance of written influences in the creation and circulation of the non-written culture. Unfortunately, both Watt's and Fox's studies are of later period; not much about the circulation of information in the earlier period can be known from their works. Moreover, Watt's study is of a period when the general growth of literacy has made a popular 'printed culture' possible. While an attempt to apply Fox's approach to our period will certainly encounter many difficulties, for many songs, ballads or rhymes may never have been written down.<sup>85</sup>

Although the existing visual prints of the English Reformation are much less abundant than the German ones, and the low literacy rates suggest that a sweeping conversion of the populace through the printed Word was unlikely, there is one kind of medium flourishing specifically in England that can provide us with as rich a source of information as the visual prints; that is drama. Although the mystery plays suffered a rapid decline during the sixteenth century, there was a strong growth of the moralities and interludes at the same time.<sup>86</sup> As early as Henry VIII's reign, drama was being used for social comment. The new rising administrative caste from humble origins, epitomised by Wolsey, overshadowed the aristocratic council, which had virtually governed the country during the first few years of the monarch's reign.

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<sup>85</sup> Fox most recent study however does suggest that an oral polemical campaign was carried out during the Reformation turmoil. The records of prosecution on those persons carrying seditious rhymes and songs provide plentiful evidence of operation of oral circulation in spreading information. For more discussion, see Fox's coming book.

<sup>86</sup> Norman Sanders has given us five advantages of drama as a means of persuasion under the Tudors. See his 'Drama and Propaganda' in Sanders *etc.* (eds.), The Revels History of Drama in England: II, 1500-1576 (London, 1980), pp.12-3.

Theatrical works were therefore written, under the sponsorships of noble courtiers, to voice baronial fears about royal extravagance and fiscal responsibility. John Skelton's *Magnificence* (1515-23) is an example.<sup>87</sup>

When the Reformation began in the 1530s, the power of drama as religious propaganda was soon realised by the king's ministers. Richard Morison, Cromwell's major pamphleteer, suggested to Henry in the 1530s that plays should 'set forth and declare lyvely before the peoples eies the abhomynation and wickednes of the bisshop of Rome, monkes, ffreers, nonnes, and suche like, and to declare and open to them thobedience that your subiectes by goddes and mans lawes owe unto your magestie.'<sup>88</sup> Thereafter, ministers, such as Thomas Cranmer and Cromwell, sponsored the production of propagandist plays.<sup>89</sup>

As early as in the 1920s, a group of scholars at Chicago University recognised the significance of drama in shaping public opinions in Reformation England. They believed that 'in the sixteenth century the play and the masque did the work of modern newspaper in guiding opinion.' More recently, scholars were tended to choose playwrights with evident religious position and works with strong polemic

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<sup>87</sup> N. Sanders, p.13. Other important playwrights of the time were John Heywood, John Rastell (Heywood's son-in-law), and John Roo. See *ibid.*, pp.13-5.

<sup>88</sup> See Sydney Anglo's transcription of 'Extract from "A Discourse Touching the Reformation of the Lawes"' (London, British Library, Cotton Faustina C.ii, fols, 15v-18v), published in 'An Early Tudor Programme for Plays and Other Demonstrations against the Pope,' *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 20 (1957), p.179. Cf. David Scott Kastan, "'Holy Wurdes" and "Slypper Wit": John Bale's *King Johan* and the Poetics of Propaganda', (hereafter 'John Bale') in *Rethinking the Henrician Era: Essays on Early Tudor Texts and Contexts*, (ed.) Peter C. Herman (Urbana and Chicago, 1994), pp.266-7.

<sup>89</sup> See Sanders, *The Revels History of Drama in England: II, 1500-1576*, pp.16-7.



information for investigation. Rainer Pineas, for instance, analyses the plays of those Protestant dramatists, such as John Bale, Richard Wever, and Sir David Lindsay, discussing the specific skills adopted by these playwrights to promote their Protestant doctrines.<sup>90</sup>

Greg Walker believes that, under the Tudors, drama was considered a tool for persuasion; it was adopted purposely by opponent factions to promote their respective policies and interests.<sup>91</sup> It is therefore possible for us to trace contemporary political issues and debates by penetrating the purposes of writing behind the political plays.<sup>92</sup> The significance of Walker's work is his attempt to fill the gap between the two disciplines—history and literary studies; he points out the value of dramatic texts as historical source material. He argues convincingly that political plays 'did not simply allude to or reflect current political issues; they actively involved themselves in those issues and sought to influence their outcome through that involvement. They are political plays not merely because they touched upon political acts, but because they were themselves political acts, written to explore and determine questions of considerable importance to their authors; to persuade, cajole, and convince their audiences, and thus to achieve political ends.'<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> R. Pineas, Tudor and Early Stuart Anti-Catholic Drama (London, 1972).

<sup>91</sup> As to Walker's studies on Tudor factions, see his 'Faction, Faith and Ideology in the Henrician Reformation', History of European Ideas, 18:3 (1994), pp.407-15, and Persuasive Fictions: Faction, Faith and Political Culture in the Reign of Henry VIII (Aldershot, c.1996).

<sup>92</sup> Walker, John Skelton and the Politics of the 1520s (Cambridge, 1988); Plays of Persuasion: Drama and Politics at the Court of Henry VIII (Cambridge, 1991). His most recent work, The Politics of Performance in Early Renaissance Drama (Cambridge, 1998), is basically from similar perspective.

<sup>93</sup> Walker, Plays of Persuasion, pp.2-3.



The tradition of political drama studies has tended to be more interested in the plays prepared for the court or noble household entertainment than in those for the populace. The function of drama was certainly not confined to the high society, however. As discussed above, it was, especially during the Reformation period, adopted as an efficient means of promoting religious policies. Elton is one of the few early historians of Reformation to have noticed that the potential of the genre had been recognised by contemporaries. In his study of propaganda campaigns, he mentions that in about 1535/1536 Morison has proposed a more skilful application of drama to intensify the anti-papal propaganda. He also mentions the role of 'the official playwright' John Bale in Cromwell's propagandist circle. Elton, however, due to the lack of systematic collection of theatrical performance records in his time, was unable to develop this line of enquiry.<sup>94</sup>

In the concluding sentence of his discussion of polemic drama, Elton feels relief in being able to state that at least 'the prehistory of the Elizabethan stage was not littered with pope-hunting plays commissioned by Thomas Cromwell.'<sup>95</sup> However, a growing number of recent studies show that many plays, as many treatises and pamphlets, in the Reformation period were written to promote the religious movement. Seymour B. House's article on Tudor drama and politics provides a good overview of the development of polemical plays in the period. He, like Elton, offers a chronological description of the production of polemical drama and its political context.<sup>96</sup> House also notices in his study that 'by the 1530s some players were

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<sup>94</sup> Elton, Policy and Police, pp.185-6.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> S.B. House, 'Literature, Drama and Politics', in Diamaid MacCulloch (ed.), The Reign of Henry VIII, pp.181-201.

offering far more radical fare than they had previously, sheltering behind the protection of a patron, exploiting the uncertainty of the times.’ However, he spared further discussion on the role of players in carrying polemical drama.<sup>97</sup>

The Reformation propaganda campaign consisted not only of writing, or of publishing, but also of distributing.<sup>98</sup> In other words, if we want to assess how successful the Reformation propaganda was, we shall not only study the ‘production’ of the works, but also the ‘distribution’ of them as well. As far as influence is concerned, the second stage of the propagandist procedure was probably more important than the first one. To assess the spreading of the polemics, we can not ignore the conditions of communication of the time, and the role of vehicles carrying the works—in our case, travelling players.

As early as in 1969, Roger Manning recognised the importance of communication in enforcing the religious policy of the government. In his study of Elizabethan Sussex, he points out that ‘Elizabethan England was far from being an homogeneous society. Roads everywhere were poor and hindered communication. There was no salaried, professional civil service in the provinces. Considering these difficulties, it is no wonder that a gap existed between the intent of the Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity and their actual enforcement in the counties of

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<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, p.182.

<sup>98</sup> Elton, to emphasise the importance of publishing of propagandist works, remarks that the king’s propagandist campaign ‘consisted of *publishing* books and pamphlets, not just of writing them; unless a manuscript bears directly on published work or clearly formed an early stage of intended publication, it cannot be used to describe the government’s organisation of their appeal to the world to believe in the justice of their proceedings.’ See his *Policy and Police*, p.172.

England.<sup>99</sup> Communication certainly played a crucial role in the advancement of the Reformation. To judge the dissemination of Protestantism and its acceptance by people in different areas, however, is a fairly difficult task; very few records recording popular reactions to the preaching of the new religions are extant, or ever existed. We can only, mostly through indirect evidence, speculate about popular responses to the new religion.<sup>100</sup> The study of livery players during the Reformation may enable us to gain insight into the way in which the new religion was distributed and received. John Foxe called 'players, printers, preachers' as the reformers's 'triple bulwark against the triple crown of the pope.'<sup>101</sup> Roelker remarks that 'theatrical productions, especially those of itinerant performers in marketplace and town squares, offered a fertile field for oral communication.'<sup>102</sup> Watt in her study of the peddling also acknowledges the importance of other travellers on the roads. She points out, 'The distribution of cheap print relied especially on a network of wayfarers: minstrels, broadside ballad sellers, interlude players, petty chapmen.' Certainly, the religious teachings were disseminated along these lines of communication, which, as Watt put it, connected the country, both socially and geographically.<sup>103</sup>

Paul W. White has done much to illustrate the role of travelling companies in

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<sup>99</sup> Manning, *Religion and Society in Elizabethan Sussex*, xii.

<sup>100</sup> Roelker has pointed out the key role played by itinerant peddlers in carrying forbidden devotional books in the continent. See her 'The Impact of the Reformation Era', p.55.

<sup>101</sup> John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments of John Foxe*, (ed.) S.R. Cattley, rev. Josiah Pratt (London, 1877), vol.6, p.57. Cf. Kastan, 'John Bale', p.268.

<sup>102</sup> Roelker, 'The Impact of the Reformation Era', p.54.

<sup>103</sup> Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety*, p.5.

spreading Protestant doctrines by reconstructing the touring and performance of several livery companies, most importantly John Bale's.<sup>104</sup> Many livery companies remain unstudied, however, and White's work provides a blue-print for further studies. Moreover, just as propagandist pamphlets were sponsored by both the conservative and the reforming, the study of polemic drama should not be confined to those speaking for Protestantism. Catholic beliefs, as many revisionist historians have demonstrated, remained strong in many areas of the kingdom, and many magnates, who acted as patrons, kept faithful to their old religion. Anti-Protestant works were written for these Catholic patrons on the eve of the Reformation, and they certainly revived during Mary's reign. Was there also a counter-Reformation attempt carried by livery players before the issue was finally settled? This is question seldom noticed.

#### **iv. Sources and Approach**

The main body of the sources consulted by this thesis is from the Malone Society Collections and the Records of Early English Drama (REED) series. The Malone Collections were compiled earlier this century and provide records of Kent,<sup>105</sup> Norfolk, Suffolk, and Lincolnshire. The REED project has published fourteen collections—York (1979), Chester (1979), Coventry (1979), Newcastle-upon-Tyne (1982), Norwich 1540-1642 (1984), Cumberland/Westmorland/Gloucestershire (1986), Devon (1986), Cambridge (1989), Herefordshire/Worcestershire (1990),

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<sup>104</sup> Paul W. White, Theatre and Reformation: Protestantism, patronage, and playing in Tudor England (Cambridge, 1993).

<sup>105</sup> As the records at Kent are more complete in the recent survey of the REED project, I applied the data of Kent provided by REED instead.

Lancashire (1991), Shropshire (1994), Somerset (1996), and Bristol (1997), and Cornwall/Dorset (1999). Surveys of many other areas are still in preparation of various degrees. Unpublished records of areas including Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Derbyshire, Durham, Hampshire, Kent, Leicestershire, London Parish/Middlesex, Nottinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Sussex, Warwickshire, and Yorkshire, are stored at the REED office at Toronto. Most of them, under the generous permission of the Office and the editors, have been consulted in this study. Records of Surrey and Warwickshire are not preserved at the office, but have been kindly provided for consultation by the editors, Dr Sally-Beth MacLean (Surrey) and Dr J. Alan B. Somerset (Warwickshire). Records of London Corporation and Guilds, though at the office, are unfortunately inaccessible.<sup>106</sup> For those counties whose records are not collected or not yet arranged, I turned to published sources and to the help of county record offices directly.<sup>107</sup>

Between them, the Malone Society Collections and the REED projects provide a systematic and complete compilation of sources for early English drama. As the preface of the REED publication illustrates, the purpose of the survey is 'to find, transcribe, and publish external evidence of dramatic, ceremonial, and minstrels activity in Great Britain before 1642.'<sup>108</sup> The contents of their collections are miscellaneous. According to the nature of the activities, the records can generally be classified into five groups: (1) dramatic events: such as the mystery cycles, the

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<sup>106</sup> For more complete details of the Malone and REED collections, see bibliography.

<sup>107</sup> Ian Lancashire's Dramatic texts and Records of Britain: A Chronological Topography to 1558 (Cambridge, 1984) is up to now the most useful reference for dramatic records in Britain.

<sup>108</sup> David N. Klausner (ed.), Records of Early English Drama, Herefordshire/Worcestershire, (Toronto, 1990), vii.

Creed, Pater Noster, saints' plays, miracles, moralities, liturgical plays, mummings, interludes, St. George plays, mimed dialogues, the repertory of itinerant professional troupes. (2) Ceremonial activities: including the Corpus Christi processions, quasi-dramatic guild, church, and household rituals or procedures,<sup>109</sup> civic royal entries, seasonal ridings or city officials, civic watches, provincial tournies, and formal combats-at arms. (3) Folk events: the Robin Hood gatherings, plough, sword, and morris dances, May Day celebrations, and the summer game. (4) Minstrelsy: including the work of professional musicians, trumpeters, and civic waits, and of their fraternities and courts. Records of dramatic or minstrel equipment, such as stages, theatres, and musical instruments are also edited. (5) Entertainments normally connected with these activities: such as church ales, disguising, puppet shows, pastimes, dancing, wrestling, juggling, and singing. Also events involved bearwards, acrobats, ringers, and jesters.<sup>110</sup>

If we classify the records from their sources, there are mainly four types of documents: (1) Legal instruments, such as cartularies, customals, deeds, indentures or contracts, leases, letters under seal, petitions, statutes, warrants, wills, and writs. (2) Administrative or ministerial proceedings, including accounts, act books, ceremonialia or books of procedures, *computi*, fabric rolls, inventories, memoranda, minutes, orders, ordinaries, register books, rentals, and surveys. (3) Judicial proceedings, such as court rolls, depositions, examinations, informations, minutes, pleas, sessions and visitation books. (4) Miscellaneous records, such as broadsheets,

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<sup>109</sup> For instance, the Feast of Fools, the Boy Bishop, Twelfth Night, and Maundy Thursday orders).

<sup>110</sup> Game sports, fairs, the liturgy, and liturgical music in themselves, if not linked with the activities mentioned, are excluded; so are royal revels at the monarch's principal courts.

chronicles, commonplace books, diaries, letters, literary and polemical works, manuscript or printed ephemera, 'memorials,' and newsheets.<sup>111</sup>

When applying dramatic records mentioned above into study, there are two major difficulties one may encounter that require further explanations. The first one concerns dating. Many records provide no date, and can only be identified by external evidence. In addition, the complicated dating systems employed in our period also make the task difficult. Pre-1642 British documents may date themselves according to three different systems. They could be dated by the regnal year, which begins on the first day of the monarch's reign; or by the Old Style calendar year, which began on 25 March in England until the eighteenth century; or by the mayoral year (for civic documents), the year of office of some guild official (for craft records), or by the special fiscal year of either a city corporation or a guild company.<sup>112</sup> Thanks to the editors of the Malone and the REED collections, most undated records have been identified if possible, and in the REED series, entries dated by different systems have been converted to the modern calendar. There is, however, one more thing that should be noted; that is, even if the date of the payment made is given, we can not be certain of the exact day of the event, unless otherwise recorded.

The second difficulty concerns the identification of the patron. Two or even more possibilities for the identification of a patron occur from time to time. For

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<sup>111</sup> For a more complete research guide for the REED project, see Ian Lancashire, 'REED Research Guide', *Records of Early English Drama Newsletter* (1976:1), p.11.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, p.17.



instance, a payment in 1551-2 at Barnstaple recorded that 'vjs. viij*d*. paid to therle of Northumberlandes players.'<sup>113</sup> John Dudley was styled 'duke' of Northumberland since 11 October 1551, while it was the Percy family who were traditionally styled as 'earls' of Northumberland. Although the Percies were deprived of the title after the death of the sixth earl in 1536, Thomas Percy, the nephew of the sixth earl, was generally styled 'earl of Northumberland' until 1572. In other words, there are two possible patrons of this troupe. Problems of the kind can only be worked out case by case. Sometimes, with the help of external evidence, we can be fairly sure of the 'real' identity of the patron, but, in many cases, we can only leave the question unsolved.<sup>114</sup>

Although there is a bountiful volume of dramatic evidence to apply to the purpose of this thesis, only records concerning patronised itinerant performers have been consulted. One type of document most helpful to this study is various accounts, such as town chamberlains' (or stewards', majors', bailiffs' receivers', and treasurers') accounts, churchwardens' accounts, estates or personal household accounts, and guild financial records.<sup>115</sup> As Alexandra F. Johnston remarks, 'financial accounts provide the most valuable and frequent source of evidence. Whether a city or great household was supporting local drama or paying travelling players, the amounts paid out would be recorded. Similarly, any profit made would be recorded.'<sup>116</sup> A more complete payment account usually contains the following

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<sup>113</sup> John M. Wasson (ed.), *REED, Devon* (Toronto, 1986), p.40.

<sup>114</sup> More cases are discussed in chapters 2 and 3.

<sup>115</sup> For the types of accounts available in each county, see the introduction of each published volume, which contains complete document description.

<sup>116</sup> A.F. Johnston, 'What if No Texts Survived? External Evidence for Early English Drama', in



elements: (1) the name of the company (either by the title of their patron or by the place they were from); (2) members of the troupe (numbers of the performers and sometimes the leader's name); (3) type of performers (players, minstrels, trumpeters, *etc.*); (4) date when the payment was made or the occasion of performance; (5) revue (such as guildhall, inn-yards, or mayor's household); (6) amount of payments. Although these elements were isolated from one another, lots of valuable information can be disclosed, especially when they are analysed systematically.

The first contribution of these records is that they help to reconstruct various aspects of the lives of travelling players. Much of this kind of information has been applied in the studies of theatrical historians, who are used to rebuilding the physical conditions of players' performance in many areas.<sup>117</sup> However, as records are scattered in various regional record offices, very few attempts at systematic analysis have been made until now. The efforts of scholars in the past twenty years have gradually brought to light the dramatic activities of many counties, but we still have very limited ideas of the operation of theatrical performance in England as a whole. One major approach of this thesis is to apply statistical analysis to the subject. I will assess the number of references to players in the records within each decade and compare it with that of other forms of entertainers to illustrate the changing fortunes of performers on road and the fluctuation of the business of players itself.<sup>118</sup> I will examine the average reward received by players in each decade to show the financial

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Marianne G. Briscoe and John C. Coldewey (eds.), Contexts for Early English Drama (Bloomington and Indianapolis, 1989), p.4.

<sup>117</sup> The best examples are the studies made by various REED editors in the introductions of their regional collection. .

<sup>118</sup> See chapter 1 and 6.

conditions of the business; and also that of the major companies to classify the hierarchy among troupes.<sup>119</sup> I will, by checking payments to each company, explore whether there was any special connection between one specific group and the locality. I will also illustrate the increasing centralisation of patronage by analysing the changing structure of patrons over the period.<sup>120</sup>

In addition, entries for players also provide abundant information of the touring of livery companies, which is helpful in determining the incentives of patronage. One major defect of dramatic records is that they seldom tell us about the content of the performance. From the entries, we may learn the payments, the performing occasion, or even the revenue of a company, but we can rarely ascertain their repertoire, which could provide direct evidence showing the purpose of the performance. This deficiency fortunately can be amended partly by analysing the touring patterns of acting troupes. Seeking for profit was one common motive shared by most travelling performers. But sometimes a livery company would abandon the more beneficial circuits, venturing to unprofitable or even unfamiliar areas. The ‘extraordinary’ choice of the company was likely to be the product of the specific obligation bestowed by the patron. In other words, because the master asked his livery troupe to disseminate certain information (either political or religious) to certain regions, the acting company was required to visit the areas assigned, leaving the more profitable ones behind. Under such circumstances, the analysis of a company’s touring pattern would help to ascertain the function provided by the livery troupe.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> See chapter 2.

<sup>120</sup> See chapter 3.

<sup>121</sup> See chapters 4 and 5.

The principles of data selection also need some explanations. The major concern of this thesis is the activity of livery players between 1530 and 1580. However, the significance of players' performance can not be fully demonstrated without seeing it in a broader chronological setting; the records consulted are therefore extended to the entire sixteenth century. In addition, entries of other types of travelling entertainers are also included in the database, as the performance of these entertainers can provide samples for comparison. And finally, since the purpose of this study is to investigate the role of players in disseminating influence and polemics beyond their household, records of their performances before their master and his family are excluded from the discussion.

Among the thirty-nine counties of Tudor England, there are no records of patronised travelling players in five—Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire, Huntingdonshire, Rutland, and Staffordshire—and 6521 entries are found in the remaining thirty-four. The entry number of each county is as follows: Berkshire 38, Buckinghamshire 19, Cambridgeshire 156, Cheshire 8, Cornwall 28, Cumberland 7, Derbyshire 115, Devon 439, Dorset 65, Durham 3, Essex 135, Gloucestershire 301, Hampshire 211,<sup>122</sup> Herefordshire 15, Kent 1747, Lancashire 41, Leicestershire 237, Lincolnshire 28, London and Middlesex 29, Norfolk 136, Northamptonshire 1, Northumberland 52, Nottinghamshire 620, Oxfordshire 115, Shropshire 291, Somerset 195, Suffolk 188, Surrey 5, Sussex 536,<sup>123</sup> Warwickshire 314, Westmoreland 10, Wiltshire 15,

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<sup>122</sup> The records of Winchester and Winchester College stored in the REED office are of 1566-1642. Records before 1556 in Winchester city and college and those over a longer period in other parts of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, which are not deposited in the REED office yet, have now been covered by the editor, Dr Jane Cowling. Only those stored at the REED office are consulted.

## **v. Conclusion**

This thesis focuses on the period 1530 to 1580. There are several reasons for this. The significance of the 1530s is evident, being the decade of the Reformation. These ten years however was also important in the history of livery players, for it is in the 1530s that players, for the first time, surpassed all other forms of itinerant performers, becoming the principal entertainers on the road.<sup>125</sup> In other words, in company with the commencement of the religious movement, the activity of patronised players reached its first peak. The possibility of a link between the two ‘incidents’ invites investigation.

The year 1580 is also crucial from many perspectives. From the point of view of theatre history, the 1580s is a new era. The first London playhouse was built in 1576. The establishment of the Theatre not only launched an era of London permanent theatres,<sup>126</sup> but also, probably more importantly, changed the nature of the whole enterprise. Players ceased to be household servants, becoming independent ‘commercially-oriented’ performers. Theatrical performance was no longer petty entertainment provided intermittently by a meagre number of travellers; it

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<sup>123</sup> Some of the dating of the Sussex records may have changed since my visit to Toronto. The REED volume of Sussex is scheduled to be published in October this year.

<sup>124</sup> For more details of the sources of the records, see bibliography.

<sup>125</sup> For the rise of livery players, see chapter 1.

<sup>126</sup> Following James Burbage’s example, many other playhouses were built in the following years; for instances, the Curtain (1577), the Rose (1587), the Swan (c.1596), and the Globe (1599) *etc.*

transformed to be an enterprise attracting a considerable amount of capital investment and one that could make its investors affluent and its actors national figures. In other words, although travelling players continued their touring after the 1580s, the centre of the entire business had transferred from these itinerant performers to their much better-known London counterparts.

1580 is also significant in cultural history. Drama faced serious attack from the 1580s. As Patrick Collinson has forcefully argued, in this decade (about the time of the first ascendancy of Puritanism), English society experienced a 'second Reformation'; the 'iconoclastic' urge to reform unacceptable images was replaced by an 'iconophobic' rejection of all visual, dramatic, and musical forms. The first generation of Protestants 'embraced the cultural forms which already existed and employed them...as polemical weapons against their opponents.' But the second generation 'turned their backs on these same cultural media, which now became the enemy no less than popery itself.'<sup>127</sup> Among all forms of visual presentation, drama was the one that encountered most vigorous rejection; it was labelled by the Protestants as secular and profane and something to be eradicated from the society.

1580 is also a landmark in church history. The Elizabethan Church settlement of 1559, or arguably the final promulgation of the Thirty-nine Articles in 1571, are generally accepted by scholars as the termination of the official Reformation. Although there are still many disagreements among historians over the achievement

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<sup>127</sup> Patrick Collinson, 'From Iconoclasm to Iconophobia: the cultural impact of the Second English Reformation', in Peter Marshall (ed.), The Impact of the English Reformation, pp.278-308. This article is reprinted from The Stenton Lecture (Reading, 1985). See also his The Birthpangs of Protestant England: religious and cultural change in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (London, 1988), p.98.

of Protestantism amongst the mass of the English people, the fervent Reformation propaganda campaign had certainly come to an end by 1580. As one major function of livery players during the religious turmoil was to propagandise religious policies, taking 1580 as the concluding year of our study appears to be appropriate.

The patronage of livery acting companies, and the propagandist service which they provided, have for long attracted the attention of scholars. Theatre historians and literary critics are interested in the contents of performance carried by these itinerant players, whereas historians have tended to focus on their propagandist function. Very few studies have ever crossed the boundary between the two disciplines, and sought to bring them together. This thesis is an attempt to combine the study of both practices, putting the activity of livery players into its historical context. It argues for the political significance of patronage, and illustrates that the fortune of these itinerant performers in the sixteenth century was closely linked to political development of the period. Besides, scholars have brought out several presumptions about the pre-Shakespearean English stage. Many arguments are still under debate, as no party is able to provide substantial evidence to verify their opinion. With the helps of the Malone and REED collections, this thesis is the first attempt that tries to apply statistic figures to illustrate the fluctuations of the pre-Shakespearean playing business with more accuracy.

## **Chapter 1: The World of Livery Players**

Livery players were the most important travelling performers in the mid-Tudor England. Before this period, however, they were not superior to other entertainers on the roads. To understand better how and when acting companies acquired the predominant position in the itinerant entertaining business, we shall compare the fortune of players with that of other performers on the road. Before an exploration of the role of players between 1530 and 1580 can be undertaken, some background understanding of the acting profession is necessary. In this chapter, various aspects of players' lives are examined: the vicissitudes of their business during the sixteenth century; the backgrounds of individual players; their role in the patron's household; their touring; and finally their repertory. Reconstructing the world of livery players will help us carry on our discussion on their role in the patronage system and their propagandist function during the fifty years of religious and political disturbance following the Reformation.

### **i. Players and Other Forms of Livery Entertainers**

To demonstrate the position of livery players of our period, it is necessary to compare them with other forms of travelling entertainers. Two difficulties usually encountered by scholars working on the subject should first be pointed out. The first is one of definition. Many entries, especially earlier ones, contain no definite description of the visiting troupes; they simply recorded them as entertainers or performers. This kind of obscurity, fortunately, is less common in our period, when auditors tended to record entries with better accuracy; amongst the 2757 entries of our period, only 72



of them (about 2.6%) involve such problems.<sup>1</sup>

The second difficulty arises from entries recorded in Latin. Many Latin words, often translated as players, could be applied to other forms of performer.<sup>2</sup> For instances, *histrion/histrionis* in the Shrewsbury Bailiffs' Accounts 1525-6 could mean players, while in 1520-1, and 1534-5, the same accounts use the word to refer to a singer.<sup>3</sup> *Ludator/ludatoris* mainly refers to a player, but in some cases it could also be applied to a morris dancer or an acrobat; *lusor/lusoris* was generally translated as a player, but in the Mettingham College Accounts (1513-14), it probably referred to player 'in a puppetshow'.<sup>4</sup> This, however, causes fewer problems for our discussion, as English gradually replaced Latin as the major language for recording and the percentage of Latin entries decreased as time went by.<sup>5</sup> Only 145 of our records are in Latin (around 5%); these entries, with the help of record editors, were translated into corresponding English terms. In other words, unsolved Latin entries represent only a small percentage of our data and make no crucial difference to our analysis. After clarifying these two difficulties, a further investigation of itinerant troupes can

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<sup>1</sup> The number of entertainers/performers in fact declined rapidly in the first half of the sixteenth century. There are 62 in 1500s, 52 in 1510s, 58 in 1520s, 35 in 1530s, 18 in 1540s, 3 in 1550s, 4 in 1560s, 2 in 1570s, 10 in 1580s and only 8 in 1590s.

<sup>2</sup> For a complete discussion on the problem, see Abigail A. Young, 'Plays and Players: the Latin terms for performance', *Records of Early English Drama Newsletter*, pt.1 in 9:2 (1984), pp.56-62; pt.2 in 10:1 (1985), pp.9-16.

<sup>3</sup> In the 1525-6 Shrewsbury Bailiffs' Accounts, a payment was made to 'iiij histrionibus comitis arundell', while in 1520-1 and 1534-5, 'histriones pronunciantes melodiam' and 'histriones pronunciantes melodiam et cantilenas' were rewarded respectively.

<sup>4</sup> Young, 'Plays and Players', pt.1, pp.58-61.

<sup>5</sup> There are 63 Latin entries in 1530s (10.5%), 33 in 1540s (7.2%), 9 in 1550s (2.9%), 17 in 1560s



now be pursued.

Travelling companies of our period, according to the nature of their performance, can be categorised into the following groups: players (including interluders and banncriers),<sup>6</sup> minstrels, bearwards/animal-wards, jesters/jugglers, musicians/trumpeters, waits, minor entertainers (such as fools, dancers, and boy bishops), and those obscurely recorded as entertainers or performers. Among the entire 2757 entries for livery companies, 1512 of them belong to players (54.8%), 426 to minstrels (15.5%), 310 to bearwards/animal-wards (11.2%), 83 to jesters/jugglers (3%), 184 to musicians/ trumpeters (6.7%), 161 to waits (5.8%), 19 to minor performers (0.7%), and 62 to indefinite entertainers (2.2%). In other words, players were obviously the most important travelling performers in mid-sixteenth-century England.

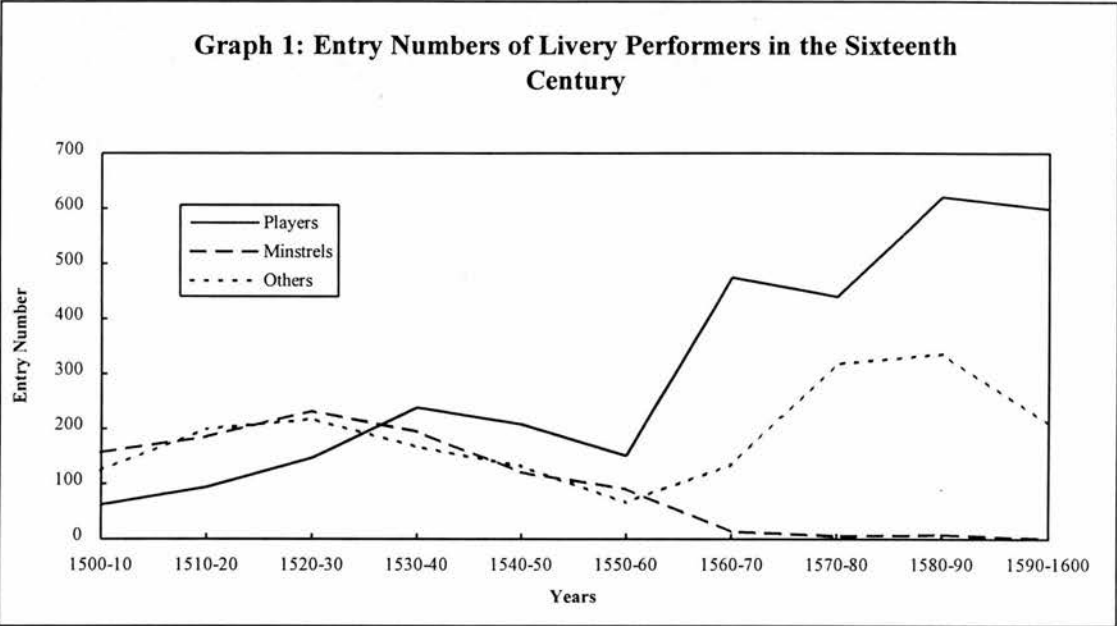
This is not always the case, however. To make the picture more explicit, the survey was extended to the entire sixteenth century. Graph 1 shows the entry numbers of players, minstrels, and other forms of entertainers in the sixteenth century. It reveals that from the 1500s onwards, the entries of players increased steadily until reaching a peak in the 1530s (62 in 1500s, 94 in 1510s, 147 in 1520s,

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(2.7%), and 23 in 1570s (3%).

<sup>6</sup> 14 out of the entire 1512 player entries of 1530-80 recorded performers as banncriers. Although the nature of banncriers remains unclear to us, Giles E. Dawson, based on his study on banncriers of Appledore who were rewarded at New Romney, argued that 'doubtless those who cried the banns were ordinarily the players themselves.' See his Records of Plays and Players in Kent, 1450-1642 (London, 1965), xiii-xiv. What is worthy of mentioning here is that all these fourteen entries belong to companies by name of locality. In other words, players sponsored by great men in general did not (need to) advertise their plays before performance as local players did.

238 in 1530s). The acting business then experienced a temporary decline in the 1540s and 1550s (208 in 1540s, 151 in 1550s); but soon revived in the 1560s (475 entries). It dropped slightly in the 1570s (440 entries), but rose again in the last two decades of the century (621 in 1580s and 599 in 1590s).<sup>7</sup>



The experience of the minstrels was very different from that of players. In the first two decades of the century, minstrels, who enjoyed a leading position in the travelling business, underwent a similar experience to that of players with their business progressing constantly (157 in 1500s, 185 in 1510s, and 232 in 1520s). But unlike their acting fellowmen, minstrels soon faced a rapid decline after the 1520s, their entry numbers dropping from 232 in the 1520s to 194 in the 1530s, 121 in the 1540s, 91 in the 1550s, and 14 in the 1560s. They finally reached the bottom of their

<sup>7</sup> The entry numbers of players after the 1570s should be more delicately analysed, as the emergence of the London stage had caused tremendous changes to the conventional travelling business. More discussion of this period is carried out in chapter 6.

fortunes after the 1560s: their entry level dropped to less than ten entries in each decade thereafter (6 in 1570s, 8 in 1580s, and 1 in 1590s), indicating that the performance of minstrels had become marginal in the travelling business by the end of the century.

The story of the remaining forms of entertainers was less dramatic compared with that of players and minstrels. Their numbers also rose in the first two decades (124 in 1500s, 199 in 1510s, 217 in 1520s), and declined constantly until reaching the bottom in the 1550s (167 in 1530s, 132 in 1540s, 67 in 1550s). However, unlike minstrels, whose business never revived after the 1520s, entry numbers for the remaining forms of entertainers increased again in the 1560s (135 entries); this trend continued to proceed in the following two decades (318 in 1570s and 336 in 1580s) and their business degenerated again in the last ten years of the century (209 entries).<sup>8</sup>

To demonstrate further the different fortunes of players, minstrels, and the remaining performers, a comparison of the gap between the highest and lowest entry number of each form of company was made. Among the three groups of livery troupes in the graph, players were the one that underwent greatest change (the gap is 559 entries). The fluctuation of minstrels' business was also impressive (the gap is 231 entries). Compared to players and minstrels, other forms of entertainers experienced far less vacillation in their business, the gap being 69 entries only.

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<sup>8</sup> For a detailed list of the entry numbers of all forms of livery companies, see appendix 1.

Apart from providing a general picture of the fluctuation of itinerant companies, graph 1 also reveals other important information. Firstly, it suggests that in the 1530s players for the first time superseded minstrels, becoming the most important performers on the road. After the 1530s, they experienced some recessions, but never lost their leading position in the travelling business. In addition to this fact, the graph demonstrates that the 1530s and 1560s were the two peak decades of the acting business.

The fluctuations of minstrels and players in the sixteenth century reveal that the 1530s and 1560s were turning points in the travelling business. The 1530s was the era of the Reformation; it was also during this period that the trade of players superseded that of minstrels. Compared to minstrels, players were more convenient in promoting the religious movement: their performance was more explicit and apart from vocal presentations, they had visual ones to animate the messages, making which more accessible to the public. This advantage enjoyed by players probably explains why their business boosted and superseded other forms of entertainers in the decade of the Reformation. The 1560s was the first decade of Elizabeth's reign and in these early years, religion and succession loomed. The revival of the acting business at this time suggests that players contributed to the contemporary debates by serving a propagandist function.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> For more discussion of the propagandist function of players, see the last section of this chapter and chapters 4 and 5.

## ii. Individual Players

Compared to the era of the London Stage, when regular performance and better cast-lists were provided, our period preserves much less information about players' background. In the pre-Shakespearean era, players were usually rewarded as a company; not as individuals; their names and lives are therefore difficult to trace. Among the entire 1512 player entries between 1530 and 1580, only seven of them mention individual players; five names are found: John English, John and William Sly, George Frend, and one 'Hamond' whose first name was not to be identified.<sup>10</sup> Thanks to the efforts of John Murray, E.K. Chambers, Edwin Nungezer, and Ian Lancashire, we are now able to trace the names of 185 Tudor players, 49 of whom entered the profession on or before the year 1580.<sup>11</sup>

John English is one of the best-documented players of our period. He appeared as a court interluder as early as 1494. At that time, there were three other members within the troupe: Edward May, Richard Gibson, and John Hammond; each of them received an annual fee of £3 6s. 8d. It appears that English had become the company

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<sup>10</sup> John English was recorded at Southampton (Hampshire) in 1530-2; John Sly at Battenhall in 1532-3 and Worcester in 1533-4 (both in Worcestershire); William Sly at Crowle in 1530-1 and Battenhall in 1534-5 (both in Worcestershire); George Frend at Maldon (Essex) in 1566; and 'Hamond' at Vemon of Haddon Hall (Derbyshire) in 1564-5. See David N. Klausner (ed.), REED, Herefordshire/Worcestershire (Toronto, 1990), pp.513, 519, 526, 530. Peter Greenfield and Jane Cowling (eds.), 'REED, Hampshire' (forthcoming) and John Wasson and Barbara D. Palmer (eds.), 'REED, Derbyshire' (forthcoming), and John C. Coldewey, 'Early Essex Drama: A History of its Rise and Fall, and a Theory Concerning the Digby Plays' (unpublished Ph D dissertation of University of Colorado, 1972), p.280.

<sup>11</sup> See Murray, English Dramatic Companies, 1558-1642, 2 vols. (London, 1910), Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage (Oxford, 1923), especially vol.2. Nungezer, A Dictionary of Actors (Ithaca, N.Y., 1929), and Lancashire, Dramatic Texts and Records of Britain: a chronological topography to 1558 (Cambridge, 1984).

leader by 1503 and his troupe was amongst those accompanying Princess Margaret to Edinburgh for her wedding with James IV of Scotland. English stayed in the King's company when Henry VIII ascended to the throne, and remained the head of it. According to Chambers, the career of English can be traced to around 1532, when he received the last provincial payment at Southampton in 1530-2.<sup>12</sup>

Apart from English, several names of court interluders can also be identified, but our knowledge of their lives remains fragmentary. As mentioned earlier, there were three other players in English's company: May, Gibson, and Hammond. In 1503, the members of the company increased from four to five; William Rutter and John Scott took the place of Hammond.<sup>13</sup> Richard Gibson disappeared from the list after 1514, which might be a result of his appointment as Porter and Yeoman Tailor of the Great Wardrobe.<sup>14</sup> John Scott died in 1528-9.<sup>15</sup> Other actors joined the company in succession; they were Richard Hole, George Maylor, George Birch, John Roll (or Roo) (*d.*1539), Thomas Sudbury (or Sudborough) (*d.*1546), Robert Hinstock, Richard Parrowe, John Slye, and John Young.<sup>16</sup> No major change of the

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<sup>12</sup> The Southampton entry records that 5*s.* was given to 'Inglysshe & hys company the kynges players'. See Chambers, *ibid.*, vol.2, pp.78-80; Coldewey, 'Early Essex Drama', p.280.

<sup>13</sup> Chambers, *ibid.*, p.78.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p.80.

<sup>15</sup> Scott's death was recorded in details by a contemporary chronicler. According to him, Scott was put in Newgate 'for rebukynge of the shreffes, and was there a sennet, and at the last was ledde betwene two of the offecers from Negate thorow London and soe to Newgat agayne, and then was delyveryd home to hys howse; but he toke such a thowte that he dyde, for he went in hys shurte'. See *ibid.*, p.80 n.3.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p.80.

company's structure took place when it passed under the patronage of Edward VI; only some senior players retired and four new members, Richard Coke, John Birch, Henry Heryot, and John Smyth, were introduced. According to a warrant to the Master of the Great Wardrobe on 15 February 1548, two more players, Richard Skinner and Thomas Southey, were appointed with three others (Coke, John Birch, and Heryot) as yeomen officers of the household. The same members appeared on a list of 1552; only Robert Hinstock was replaced by John Browne.<sup>17</sup> Heryot disappears from the records after 1552, and so do John Birch, Coke, and Southey after 1556; their vacancies seem to remain unfilled.<sup>18</sup>

No major change in the royal troupe happened under Mary's reign. The players were re-appointed when Elizabeth came to the throne; a warrant of 25 December 1559 shows that Edmund Strowdewike and William Reading<sup>19</sup> took the places of George Birch and Skinner, becoming the new interluders. Browne and Reading died in 1563, and Strowdewicke in 1568. Smith survived until 1580 and was the one who organised the provincial performances of the company up to about 1573. After the mid-1570s, 'the royal company of players of interluders'<sup>20</sup> suffered a drastic decline; before 1583, the year in which Elizabeth's new company was formed, there are only

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<sup>17</sup> In other words, there are eight players in the king's company in 1552. They are George Birch, Richard Coke, John Birch, Henry Heryot, John Smyth, Richard Skinner, Thomas Southey, and John Browne.

<sup>18</sup> Chambers, *ES*, vol.2, pp.81-3.

<sup>19</sup> According to Chambers, Reading was a London player in 1550. See *ibid.*, p.83.

<sup>20</sup> This is the formal title of the court company. See *ibid.*, p.77.

four records of their performance extant.<sup>21</sup>

Apart from these court interluders, several names of the Queen's company are also available. According to a Worcester payment in 1533-4, Anne Boleyn's players, which contained four members, was led by one John Sly(e).<sup>22</sup> When the company visited Battenhall (Worcestershire) in 1534-5, William Sly(e)<sup>23</sup> was the leading payee.<sup>24</sup> And an appeal of the Queen's players in 1536 shows that there were at least four members in Queen Jane's company: Young, Sly(e), Sotherne, and Mounffeld.<sup>25</sup>

Among all these Queen's players, the Sly(e)s are the ones of whom we have the best knowledge. The career of John Sly(e) can be traced back as early as 1526, when he was mentioned as the chief actor of the troupe.<sup>26</sup> John continued to be named as King's player after 1553.<sup>27</sup> And as mentioned above, he became Queen

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<sup>21</sup> They are Doncaster (1575), Faversham (1575-6), Norwich (1577-8), and Gloucester (1580-1). See David Galloway, REED, Norwich 1540-1642 (Toronto, 1982), p.59; A. Douglas and P. Greenfield (eds.), REED, Cumberland/Westmorland/Gloucestershire (Toronto, 1986), p.307; James Gibson (ed.), 'REED, Kent' (forthcoming), and Borough of Doncaster (ed.), 'Account of Alderman William Smyth made before the said mayor', A Calendar to the Records of the Borough of Doncaster, 4 vols (Doncaster, 1899-1903), vol.4, p.54.

<sup>22</sup> See REED, Herefordshire/Worcestershire, p.526.

<sup>23</sup> One William Sly who played in '2 Seven Deadly Sins' for either the Strange's men or the Admiral's in about 1590-1 was mentioned by Chambers. This however could not be the queen's player William, who appeared in our records as early as 1534-5. See Chambers, ES, vol.2, p.340.

<sup>24</sup> REED, Herefordshire/Worcestershire, p.530.

<sup>25</sup> For the details of the appeal, see 'players on tour' in this chapter.

<sup>26</sup> REED, Herefordshire/Worcestershire, p.494.

<sup>27</sup> What is interesting is that John English continued to a major member of the king's players, when his group, with three other members, visited Grimley in 1528-9 and Southampton in 1530-2. In other words, it seems very likely that, at least between 1528-32, there were two companies of the king's



Anne's player in 1533-4 and Queen Jane's in 1536. From these records, we find that between 1526 and 1536, John was described under three different titles.

The story of William Sly(e) was even more complicated. William first appeared in 1530-1 when he was described as Princess Mary's player.<sup>28</sup> He was later mentioned in a Battenhall payment of 1534-5 as Queen Anne Boleyn's player.<sup>29</sup> As Mary was the daughter of Queen Katherine, it is difficult to imagine that the transfer of Sly(e)'s company from Mary's patronage to that of Anne was out of friendship between the two mistresses. In fact, combining the experiences of the two Sly(e)s, we come to the conclusion that royal players, at least in the earlier period, were only loosely connected to their master/mistress. They were servants of the Tudors and therefore could be called the players of whichever royal member was appropriate.

Court interluders are the best documented players of our period. Apart from these royal servants, only eight players whose career ended before 1576 are known to us: Thomas Goughe and John Greaves were members of Sir Robert Lane's Men, which performed at court during the Christmas of 1571-2;<sup>30</sup> 'Hamond' was the leader of earl of Worcester's company when it was rewarded 13*s.* 4*d.* at Haddon Hall,

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players, led by English and Slye respectively. See REED, Herefordshire/Worcestershire, pp.499, 504, 519, and 'REED, Hampshire' (forthcoming).

<sup>28</sup> REED, Herefordshire/Worcestershire, p.513.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p.530.

<sup>30</sup> The only other record about the company was in 1569-70 at Bristol. See Mark Pilkinton, REED, Bristol (Toronto, 1997), p.78.

Derbyshire, on 13 January 1565;<sup>31</sup> John Perkin and Peter Clark were earl of Leicester's players between 1572-4;<sup>32</sup> and Myles Somelymes a Lord Somerset's player.<sup>33</sup> The remaining two men were slightly different from those above; they were not under noble patronage and were very possibly regional players. Peter Moon was the leader of a company rewarded at Ipswich in 1562;<sup>34</sup> while George Frend and his company were fined 20s for performing a stage play without permission at Maldon in 1566.<sup>35</sup>

Many players continued their career after the ascendance of London era, although they often underwent some major transformations within the acting profession. The careers of the Dutton brothers, John and Laurence (or Lawrence), provide a good example. According to Mark Eccles, their father was a weaver, and the two brothers seem to have taken up the family profession before entering the playing business.<sup>36</sup> John first appeared in 1567-8, when he furnished musicians for Lincoln's Inn and probably later joined Sir Robert Lane's Men with his brother.<sup>37</sup> A

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<sup>31</sup> 'REED, Derbyshire' (forthcoming).

<sup>32</sup> This is based on the letter written by Leicester's players to their master and the licence granted to the company on the Patent Roll. For the two documents, see Collections, vol.1, pt.3 (Malone Society, London, 1909), pp.262-3, 348-9. See also chapter 6.

<sup>33</sup> J.C. Boswell is the person who has recently ascertained the identity of Somelymes. See his 'Seven Actors in Search of a Biographer', Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England, vol.2 (New York, 1985), pp.52-3.

<sup>34</sup> Chambers, ES, vol.2, p.330.

<sup>35</sup> Coldewey, 'Early Essex Drama', p.280.

<sup>36</sup> Mark Eccles, 'Elizabethan Actors', Notes and Queries, ns 38 (March 1991), p.49.

<sup>37</sup> As Lawrence was payee for the company's performance at court, there was no doubt of his being a

warrant of 5 January 1572 shows that Lawrence was then the leading player of the Lane's company when it performed at the Court during the Christmas season.<sup>38</sup> The Lane's Men disappeared from the stage after 1572-3.<sup>39</sup> Lawrence later came into view as the leader of the earl of Lincoln's Men, and remained in the company until 1575.<sup>40</sup> The two brothers led the earl of Warwick's company when it rewarded at the court in 1575-6. On April 13, 1580, Lawrence was spoken of as a servant of the earl of Oxford, whereas John had doubtless transferred to Oxford's troupe by then.<sup>41</sup> John was recruited to the Queen's Men when the company was first established in 1583. Lawrence later joined the troupe as well. The two brothers were leaders of the Queen's Men on its trip to Nottingham.<sup>42</sup> They seem to have remained in the royal troupe for the rest of their careers, and had evidently given up acting by 1594, when the Queen's players 'broke and went into the contrey to playe'.<sup>43</sup>

Nungezer once argued that 'judging from their frequent shifting from one company to another, we may assume that the Duttons (John and Lawrence) were of

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member of it. As no direct evidence shows that John was in the troupe as well, most scholars, including Chambers, did not mention him when discussed the company. Murray, however, based on C.H. Fleay's argument, put John into the company. See Murray, English Dramatic Companies, vol.1, p.309, 310 n.3.

<sup>38</sup> Chambers, ES, vol.2, p.96.

<sup>39</sup> Murray, English Dramatic Companies, vol.1, p.309.

<sup>40</sup> Chambers, ES, vol.2, p.97. Chambers argued that the statute of 1572 against vagabonds was the reason for the change of patronage from Sir Lane to Lord Lincoln. See ibid..

<sup>41</sup> Nungezer, A Dictionary of Actors, p.123.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p.123, 125. Cf. Murray, English Dramatic Companies, vol.2, p.375.

<sup>43</sup> Eccles, 'Elizabethan Actors', p.49. Cf. Chambers, ES, vol.2, p.114.

an unstable temperament'. He cited the preface of some contemporary verses as evidence:

'The Duttons and theyr fellow-players forsakyng the Erle of Warwycke theyr mayster, became followers of the Erle of Oxford, and wrot themselves his COMOEDIANS, which certayne Gentlemen altered and made CAMOELIONS. The Duttons, angry with that, compared themselves to any gentleman; therefore these armes were devysed for them.'<sup>44</sup>

The Duttons may have been, as Nungezer believes, of 'chameleon-like character', but this was not the major reason of their frequent transfer of companies. In fact, if we survey the 49 known players of the pre-1580 period, we find that 8 out of the 14 players who continued their career after 1576 served in more than one company.<sup>45</sup> The figure becomes even more significant if we also examine the careers of the 35 players who retired from the stage by 1576; it turns out that none of these pre-1576 players had ever changed their companies.<sup>46</sup> In other words, while shifting from one company to another was almost impossible in the earlier period, it became commonplace after 1576. This fact had a profound effect on the nature of the acting profession. When players no longer spent their entire lives in the same troupe, which also meant serving the same master, the relationship between the company and its patron altered significantly. Players used to be lifelong household servants; they now became independent performers accountable to the public.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Nungezer, *A Dictionary of Actors*, p.124. Cf. Chambers, *ibid.*, pp.98-9.

<sup>45</sup> This fact is further proved if we look at the careers of some Elizabethan actors: John and Edward Alleyns, for example had been in three troupes; Robert Shaw and John Symons four; and Shakespeare was possibly connected with five companies. See Chambers, *ibid.*, pp.296-9, 338, 339, 341; and Nungezer, *ibid.*, pp.4-12, 315-6, 323, 346.

<sup>46</sup> Court interluders, though had served more than one master/mistress, could not be considered as having changed their companies, for they remained in the same troupe, only the patronage passed from one master to his successor.

<sup>47</sup> For more discussion of the transformation of the acting profession, see chapter 6.

### iii. Players in the Household

Like most dramatists of our period, most livery players were servants of great men; their chief duty was to entertain their noble patron. It is therefore important to have a thorough understanding of players' lives in noble households, the core of dramatic patronage. The first point of interest is the procedure of recruitment, about which the lawsuit between Mayler, court interluder, and his apprentice Thomas Arthur provides some precious information. In 1528-9, Mayler accused Arthur of leaving 'without getting a license' from him. Arthur, as Mayler declared, agreed to be Mayler's apprentice for one year, and during this period, Mayler promised to teach him 'the science of playing' and to introduce him to the king's company of interluders. According to Mayler, during the apprenticeship, he provided meat and drink to the young pupil and paid him 4*d.* per day as his allowance. After seven weeks of apprenticeship, Arthur escaped with three other players of Mayler's company; they travelled to 'sundry parties of Englonde in plaigne of many interludes,' and earned a profit of £30. Mayler described Arthur as 'right harde and dull too taik any lernyng, wherby he was nothyng meate or apte too bee in service with the Kinges grace too maik any plaies or interludes before his highness.' He therefore argued that, according to the agreement, he had the right to share Arthur's income. Arthur, on the contrary, charged Mayler with breaking the contract, and asked a compensation of £26 for all his loss. As Mayler, who was then in Ludgate prison, was unable to defend himself, he was fined £4. He later appealed to Chancery, but the result is unknown.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Nungezer, A Dictionary of Actors, p.21.

The Mayler-Arther case shows that apprenticeship was a way by which young players could enter the profession. Arthur served Mayler during the period, while the latter provided meals and some payments in return; after the training, the disciple would be introduced to the king's service. Arthur's example was not exceptional. A later player, John Pig also appears to have served as an apprentice of Edward Alleyn, a leading actor in Lord Strange's company, before becoming a formal member of the troupe.<sup>49</sup>

After being recruited into a household company, a player was obliged to provide entertainment for his master whenever required. The Northumberland Household Book, the household regulations of the fifth earl, who died in 1527, records that the fifth earl 'usith and accustometh to gif yerely to every of the iiij Parsons that his Lordschip admyted as his Players to com to his Lorschip shall comande them for Playing of Playe[s] and Interludes affor his Lordship...' <sup>50</sup> Namely, admitted players performed for their lord when commanded. This service, however, was not confined to a constant residence only; players also accompanied their master travelling when necessary. During the Scottish campaign of 1533-5, for instance, the Bishop of Durham received various acting companies who accompanied their lord to war.<sup>51</sup> And fifteen players and twelve musicians were summoned, when their patron,

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p.283.

<sup>50</sup> Westfall, Patrons and Performance: Early Tudor Household Revels (Oxford, 1990), p.124.

<sup>51</sup> M.C. Bradbrook, The Rise of the Common Player (Cambridge, 1962), pp.21-2.

Robert Dudley, earl of Leicester, was dispatched to the Low Countries in 1586.<sup>52</sup>

In return to their service, a patron would supply his players with clothes (usually in the form of livery), food, and accommodation.<sup>53</sup> A warrant to the Master of the Great Wardrobe on 15 February 1548, for example, stated that three yards of red cloth, with an allowance of 3s. 4d. for the embroidering thereon of the royal initials, should be assigned to yeomen officers of the household for their usual livery.<sup>54</sup>

As the service of household players was not needed on a daily basis, it is very likely that they also provided other duties apart from performing. English, the king's player, for instance, probably served as a royal tailor or valet as well; in the warrants of 1485, English was mentioned many times for receiving 'doublettes', 'satin', and 'velvet', for making gowns and clothes of the king.<sup>55</sup> Other court interluders also began their lives in different professions: George Birch was a courier, John Young and Thomas Goodale mercers, George Mayler a 'glazier' or 'merchant tailor' and his apprentice, Thomas Arthur, a tailor. And Robert Miles, a Leicester's man, was once a goldsmith. Very few players of early Tudor period, as W.R. Streitberger remarks, had

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<sup>52</sup> Sally-Beth MacLean, 'The Politics of Patronage: Dramatic Records in Robert Dudley's Household Books', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 44 (1993), p.181.

<sup>53</sup> S.R. Westfall, 'A Commony a Christmas Gambold or a Tumbling Trick': Household Theater', in John D. Cox and David Scott Kastan (eds.), *A New History of Early English Drama* (New York, 1997), p.49 and her *Patrons and Performance*, p.125.

<sup>54</sup> Chambers, *ES*, vol.2, p.82.

backgrounds as entertainers; professionalism was not a figure of the acting world at the beginning of our period.<sup>56</sup>

#### iv. Players on Tour

When the service of players was not needed, they were allowed to tour the provinces to earn their living, and this could sometimes become their major source of revenue. Leicester's troupe was a good example. Before the September of 1560, the players had been constantly touring the country for over eighteen months, probably never in the company of their patron. Dudley's financial obligation to his men appears to have been slight during the period: between December 1559 and April 1561, only occasional payments of £7 4s. and no annual wage were given to the troupe.<sup>57</sup>

As touring revenue sometimes represented the major income of a company, it is important to explore further the conditions and process of travelling performances. The lawsuit of Queen Jane Seymour's players in around 1538 provides a good introduction to our discussion. In the 'Early Chancery Proceedings', there was a

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<sup>55</sup> William Campbell (ed.), Materials for a History of the Reign of Henry VII, from Original Documents preserved in the Public Record Office (London, 1893), pp.180-3.

<sup>56</sup> Streitberger, 'Personnel and Professionalization,' in Cox and Kastan (eds.), A New History of Early English Drama, p.339; Chambers, ES, vol.2, pp.80 n.5, 319 and his The Mediaeval Stage (Oxford, 1903), vol.2, pp.183-4. Herbert Berry, 'Shylock, Robert Miles, and Events at the Theatre', Shakespeare Quarterly, 44 (1993), p.198. In fact, Westfall suggests that when these players were not acting, they probably returned to their old trades to earn their living. See Westfall, Patrons and Performance, pp.126-7.

<sup>57</sup> MacLean, 'The Politics of Patronage', p.179.



complaint made by the queen's company:<sup>58</sup>

To Sir Thomas Awdley, Lord Chancellor,

In most humble wise sheweth unto your goode Lordshippe your dayly orator John Yonge mercer, that whereas he with one John Slye, David Sotherne, and John Mounffeld, late servants unto the most gracious Queene Jane, abought a yere and 3 quarters past, to thentent for the further increase of lyvinge to travail into the north partes in exercising theire unuall feates of playinge in interludes, he your said orator, with his other companions aforesaid, hyred a gelding of oon Randolphe Starkey to beare there playing garments, paying for the use of the same gelding twenty pence weekley till there comyng home ageyne, at which time the said Starkey well and truly promysed to your said orator and other his said companions that the said gelding should be goode, and able to performe there journey where of trouthe the same geldings was defectyve, and skarsly servyed them in there said journey, by the space of four wekes...<sup>59</sup>

According to this document, the company, consisting of four players, was on their travel into 'the north partes'; they hired a horse for twenty pence weekly to carry their costumes and the whole journey was expected to take four weeks.

Queen Jane's players used horses to travel. Road transport was, as J.A. Chartres demonstrates, one of the most important modes of transportation in the early modern England,<sup>60</sup> and there were many long-established circuits available. According to the study of Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean, there were seven major routes for travelling players in Tudor England: (1) East Anglia to Ipswich and Norwich; (2) the south-east through Canterbury to the Cinque Ports and their

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<sup>58</sup> The document is not dated. However, as Jane Seymour, who died in 1537, was made queen in June 1536, and the dispute was referred back to 'a year and three quarters past,' Stopes argued that the complaint must have been brought before Sir Thomas Audley in 1538, the year that he was ennobled. See C.C. Stopes, *Shakespeare's Environment* (London, 1914), pp.235-6.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p.236..

<sup>60</sup> J.A. Chartres, *Internal Trade in England 1500-1700* (London, 1977), p.39.

affiliates;<sup>61</sup> (3) the south-west via the coast through Southampton and Dorset or along one of several inland roads to Bristol;<sup>62</sup> (4) the Midland centring on Coventry at the heart of a network of roads running in all directions; (5) the West Midlands along the Welsh borders; (6) the north-east via the Great North Road or another important road through Leicester; and (7) the north-west from Coventry or from the north-east through the breach in the Yorkshire hills in Airedale.<sup>63</sup>

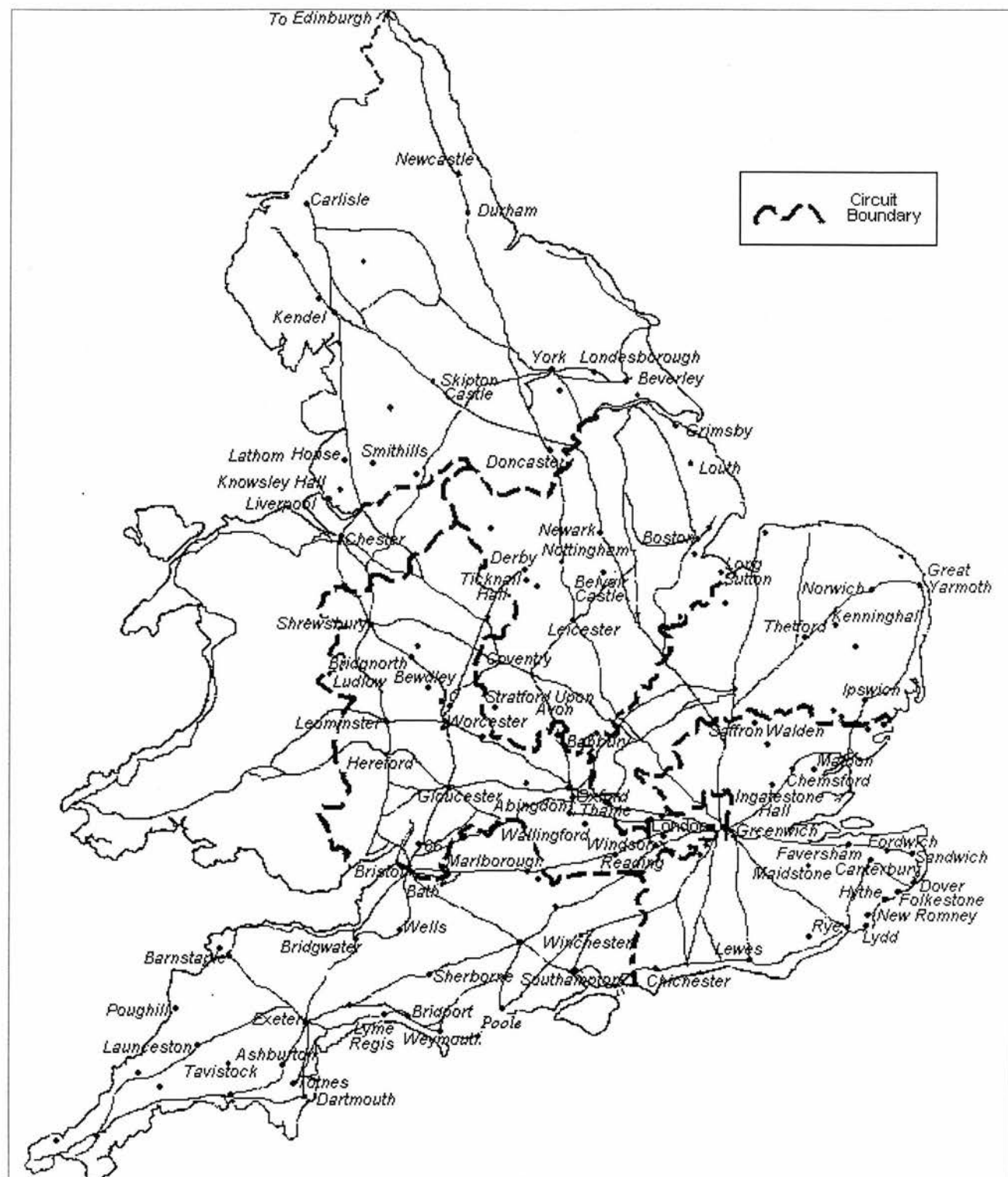
In comparing the touring circuits of players suggested with those of the assize judges, who had been touring the country since the twelfth century, we find that the two are very similar. Under the Tudors, England, apart from the City of London and Middlesex, which had its own jurisdictional arrangement, was divided into six circuits: (1) the Home circuit (including Essex, Hertfordshire, Kent, Surrey, and Sussex); (2) the Midland circuit (Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Northamptonshire, Rutland, and Warwickshire); (3) the Norfolk

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<sup>61</sup> The Queen's Men (in 1583) and Worcester's men (in 1591), for instance, followed the Roman road through Maidstone and Canterbury to the Kent coast, and then traversed the coast road between towns such as Dover, Folkestone, Hythe, Lydd and Rye. See Alan Somerset, "How Chances It They Travel?" Provincial Touring, Playing Places, and the King's Men', in *Shakespeare Survey*, 47 (1994), p.52

<sup>62</sup> Access to Bristol and the west was either by the southerly Roman road to Exeter, or to the north via the Marlborough road, and after a stop at Bath and Bristol, a company could either proceed along the Severn river via Gloucester, Tewkesbury, Worcester and Bridgnorth to Shrewsbury and north into Cheshire, or they could follow a more westerly route, crossing the Bristol Channel by ferry and proceeding north through Hereford, Leominster and Ludlow to Shrewsbury. See *ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> S. McMillin and S-B. MacLean, *The Queen's Men and their Plays* (Cambridge, 1998), pp.39-40. See also MacLean's 'Tour Routes: "Provincial Wanderings" or Traditional Circuits?', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, 6 (1993), pp.1-14. For a complete picture of the Tudor roads, see Map 1: Road System in Tudor England, in which I added the circuit boundary of the Tudor assizes, which generally match the touring circuits of players and will help us to have a clearer idea of the area of each circuit. The circuit boundary of the assize is based on J.S Cockburn's *A History of English Assizes 1558-1714* (Cambridge, 1972).



**Map 1: Road System in Tudor England**

circuit (Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, Norfolk, and Suffolk); (4) the Oxford circuit (Berkshire, Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Monmouthshire,<sup>64</sup> Oxfordshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, and Worcestershire); (5) the Northern circuit: Cumberland, Durham, Lancashire, Northumberland, Westmorland, and Yorkshire); and (6) the Western circuit (Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Hampshire, Somerset, Wiltshire).<sup>65</sup> This similarity makes the study of assize judges' itinerary helpful to our reconstructing of players' travelling.

One major piece of information which we can learn from the itinerary of assize judges is the time needed to tour a circuit. The time taken on a circuit depended, of course, on the means by which people travelled. Generally speaking, travel on foot and on horseback were the two major ways in Tudor period.<sup>66</sup> F.M. Stenton suggests that the late medieval road system in England permitted 'regular if not always easy communication between the villages of a shire and the county towns which was its head, and brought every part of the country within a fortnight's ride of London.'<sup>67</sup> Norbert Ohler, surveying in general the touring conditions in Europe, argues that 15 to 20 miles a day was feasible for the medieval travellers on foot, while 30 to 35

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<sup>64</sup> Monmouthshire was added to the circuit in 1543. The Court of Great Sessions of Wales was instituted at the same time, and was divided into four circuits. See Cockburn, *ibid.*, p.23.

<sup>65</sup> No significant structural changes were made until the nineteenth century. *Ibid.*, pp.19, 23. See also Cockburn's map on p.24.

<sup>66</sup> Ohler suggests that most people travelled on foot until well into the nineteenth century. Norbert Ohler, *The Medieval Traveller*, trans. by Caroline Hillier (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 1989), p.97.

<sup>67</sup> F.M. Stenton, 'The Road System of Medieval England', *Economic History Review*, 7 (1936), p.21. Cf. McMillin and MacLean, *The Queen's Men and Their Plays*, p.39.

miles a day was the possible travelling speed of a passenger on horseback.<sup>68</sup> These arguments, of course, are based on the presumption that no heavy luggage was carried with the traveller (which was not always the case with itinerant players). On the basis of this, McMillin and MacLean suggest that somewhere between 20 and 30 miles a day would be the reasonable travelling speed for those who travelled on horseback with followers and baggage.<sup>69</sup> One Englishman, Nicholas Assheton, for instance, spent nine days to complete his travel along the road north in 1618 between London and Downham, Lancashire. It would be reasonable to assume that he proceeded an average distance of 30 miles a day on this trip.<sup>70</sup>

As no full survey exists of the touring time taken by playing troupes to complete a circuit, the touring experience of the assize judges becomes invaluable. According to J.S. Cockburn, the Oxford circuit, the longest one, took an average of twenty-eight days in the 1580s, while the northern circuit, the shortest one, required sixteen days in the summer.<sup>71</sup> The Home circuits needed seventeen days, the Norfolk and Midland ones twenty-one days each, and the Western circuit twenty-six days.<sup>72</sup> Players of course did not travel under the same conditions as the assize judges; they

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<sup>68</sup> Ohler, The Medieval Traveller, p.97.

<sup>69</sup> McMillin and MacLean, The Queen's Men and Their Plays, p.40.

<sup>70</sup> Although Assheton's travel is later than our period, his example satisfies the estimation of Ohler's. As no evidence shows that travelling conditions were drastically improved during the turn of the century, Assheton's case suggests that Ohler's study of travelling speed in the continent can be applied to the case of Tudor England. See ibid., pp.40-1.

<sup>71</sup> The winter assize of the Northern circuit held at York and Lancaster only, and it took seven days.

<sup>72</sup> Cockburn, A History of English Assizes, p.25.

might stay at one place longer if the location appeared to be profitable and this would increase the time they needed to finish the tour (Queen Jane's players mentioned above, for instance, took four weeks to tour the northern circuit in 1538). But as both players and judges were expected to stay for several days in one place, the touring time spent by the itinerant court is still suggestive.

Although there were six to seven major routes available to players, some of them were more popular than others. Taking London as the centre, MacLean suggests that four itineraries were most favoured by travelling entertainers: they were the south-eastern route along the Kentish coast into Sussex and to Southampton, where good roads led to the west; the north-eastern one following the Old North Road to York, over to Leicester; the western route to Bristol; and the one which led into the flat counties of East Anglia.<sup>73</sup>

These routes reconstructed by scholars are invaluable to our understanding of players' touring; there is, however, a major defect in this reconstruction that should be kept in mind, which is that it is based on the assumption that all touring embarked from London. This in fact was not always the case for playing companies of the pre-London stage era. Household, instead of the Capital, was the home of itinerant companies; though they often embarked from London, as many patrons kept a residence in the metropolis, but they could have started their journey from the seat of their master in the province.

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<sup>73</sup> MacLean, 'Players on Tour', p.70.

## v. Choosing Route

Provincial touring was full of danger and hardship;<sup>74</sup> travelling players had to escape the threat to life and property posed by unpredictable weather and highwaymen, and make the best profits from the touring to make their ends meet. As mentioned earlier, some routes were more popular than others. Many factors contributed to this phenomenon, and road condition was one of them. As players travelled with carts loaded with props and costumes, good roads were important to them.<sup>75</sup> Roads in the south-east were in general more accessible than those in the north-west; and Guildford and Farnham, though both lay on the old Pilgrims' Way leading from Winchester to Canterbury, were short of visiting performers, because they were encompassed by the steep hills of the North Downs.<sup>76</sup> Weather also affected the choice of travelling routes; some roads were only available in certain months of the year. The road from Exeter, passing Bridgewater, 'Brentmarshe', and 'Weare', to Bristol, for example, could only be taken in summer. Proximity to main routes sometimes made a location popular as well. The parish of Ashburton, for instance, was preferred by players over other Devon parishes such as Chagford, because it was

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<sup>74</sup> Traditional theatre studies have portrayed provincial touring as players' last resort, taken only in times of plague in London or of declining company fortunes, for players on the road must faced uncertain weather and uncertain welcomes at the towns and noble households that the troupe wished to perform. One example most widely known is the touring of Pembroke's Men, who were forced to leave London in 1593 by the plague, and later found their travelling expenses much exceeded their gain, returning to London, sold their costume to cover the debts, and dissolved as a result. Recent research in the provincial records however shows that touring has been common for professional entertainers long before the era of London theatre. See Peter H. Greenfield, 'Touring', in Cox and Kastan (eds.), *A New History of Early English Drama*, p.251.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p.261.

<sup>76</sup> MacLean has pointed out that although the civic records of both Guildford and Farnham survived from the sixteenth century, there are very few records of travelling entertainers found. See Sally-Beth MacLean, 'Players on Tour: New Evidence from Records of Early English Drama,' in C.E. McGee (ed.), *Elizabethan Theatre*, X (Port Credit, Ontario, 1988), pp.67-9.



on the main road from Exeter to Plymouth.<sup>77</sup>

Apart from road condition and connection, profit was another factor which acting company needed to consider. Thus, the Roman road, Watling Street, was the most direct route from London and Coventry but it was not the most popular one. Extant records suggest that touring troupes embarking from London very often took less direct routes, often travelling to Abingdon and Oxford, or to farther western locations, such as Bath, Bristol, and Gloucester, before they arrived Coventry. This was probably because Watling Street between St. Albans and Coventry passed few of the sizeable towns where handsome rewards could be expected.<sup>78</sup>

Indeed, as Peter Greenfield points out, profit was one major motive for touring; provincial tours could provide, if not substantial profit, at least financial survival for the companies that undertook them.<sup>79</sup> William Ingram has estimated the cost of touring. According to Ingram, around 1600, a shilling a day per person would be the minimum expenditure incurred by a touring company on the road.<sup>80</sup> A player company of six would have spent six shillings per day if on foot, twelve shillings per day if on horseback, making their minimum weekly expenses forty-two shillings. This of course is the most conservative estimate; the expenses were often much

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<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.67-9.

<sup>78</sup> Greenfield, 'Touring', p.262.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p.254.

<sup>80</sup> This includes the expense of forgoing horses, paying six pence for the evening meal, and another six pence for an accommodation at night.



higher. Ingram in fact suggests, a month on the road could cost about fifteen pounds.<sup>81</sup>

Touring was certainly a costly activity. A company therefore would always pursue a locality where secure, if not free, accommodation and high rewards could be expected, and sometimes even venture away from the main road to pay a visit on private residences or monasteries. The households of the duke of Buckingham and of Francis Clifford, for instance, were such locations; they usually provided free meals for players for two days or more, and presumably with beds as well. The isolated Cistercians of Fountains Abbey in Yorkshire also attracted entertainers by their generous rewards before the Reformation.<sup>82</sup>

In view of this, it was inevitable that affluent areas, such as East Anglia, would be popular regions for players. Generosity and prosperity certainly influenced the payments given to players; there were however other factors that would determine the amount granted. The status and connection of the patron was probably the most important one. To understand this better, it is necessary to discuss in more detail the reward system operating behind the acting business.

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<sup>81</sup> W. Ingram, 'The Cost of Touring', Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England, 6 (1993), pp.58-9.

<sup>82</sup> See MacLean, 'Players on Tour', p.68.

## vi. Payments to Players

As Ingram's study shows, sustaining a touring company was an expensive business. Estimating the income of players is difficult, if not impossible, but Greenfield has made a valuable attempt. He reconstructed the official income of Lord Berkeley's Men in 1584, concluding that eighteen shillings was what they got during the week: five shillings at Nottingham on October 7, ten shillings at nearby Middleton Hall (Nottinghamshire) on October 10, and three shillings at Ticknall Hall (Derbyshire) on October 13.<sup>83</sup> These 'reasonably' complete payment records of Berkeley's Men, however, are exceptional; in most cases, extant accounts do not allow us to recover the rewards received by a company from every payer on the tour. In other words, it is almost impossible to calculate the real (official) revenue of an acting troupe.

Although few direct evidences are available to help us reckon the actual income of playing companies, principles for payments held by the payers can still provide precious information about players' revenue. Court accounts, for instance, record wages given to players within the royal household. In 1494, each court interluder was paid £3 6s. 8*d.* as his annual fee and the whole company given £13 6s. 8*d.*. The amount remained the same until the end of Henry VII's reign, and doubled under Henry VIII.<sup>84</sup> The accounts also provide other valuable information; they show that players within the same troupe did not always receive the same amount of

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<sup>83</sup> Greenfield, 'Touring', p.254.

<sup>84</sup> Chambers, *ES*, vol.2, pp.78-9

reward. English, the leader of the troupe, for example, got half-year wages of £3 6s. 8d. (1521-31); John Sly(e), as senior player, earned £1 13s. 4d. (1539-40); whereas other members, such as Richard Parrowe (1540-5), George Birch (1538-45), Robert Hinstock (1538-45), and George Maylor (1538-40) gained either 16s. 8d. or 11s. 1d. quarterly.<sup>85</sup>

Payments given to players outside their home base also followed some principles. The Northumberland Household Book, for example, records that between Christmas and Candlemas, the earl paid 'every Erlis Players that comes to his Lordships...If he be his speciall Lorde and Frende and Kynsman' twenty shillings, and 'every Lordis Players that comyth to his Lordshipe' ten shillings.<sup>86</sup> Two major principles were clearly operating behind the payment system of the Northumberland household: the rank of the company's patron and his relationship with the earl.

Rank and connection were certainly the two major considerations that affected the size of (official) payments.<sup>87</sup> Dawson, in his study of Kent, argues that payments

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<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p.79 n.2. Annual fees however were not the only, nor even the major, income of livery players. As Chambers pointed out, the court interluders, were rewarded from time to time with additional sums for their performance, while they sometimes received minor gifts from members of the royal family or other noblemen and ladies. See *ibid.*, p.81.

<sup>86</sup> Thomas Percy, 'The Northumberland Household Book', in Francis Groce (ed.), The Antiquarian Repertory, vol.4 (London, 1809), p.254.

<sup>87</sup> It is reasonable to presume that the amount of 'unofficial' rewards collected at the end of the performance was less predictable; it could vary based upon the quality of performance, the economic ability of the audience, the content of the performance, and even the weather. And as we do not have sufficient records of these payments to help us make further analysis, the discussion here is based on the extant official payments that we can collect. As there is no data of 'unofficial' rewards available, there are always some uncertainty in our analysis of payments to players. This defect also appear in our discussion of the revenue of acting companies in chapters 2 and 3.

to performers were strongly influenced by the rank of patrons and the patron's connection with the town. He remarks that troupes of the royal family on average received bigger rewards than those of the peers; and if a patron had special connection with the town, his troupe would usually be rewarded more generously.<sup>88</sup> Records from Gloucester also support Dawson's observation. In 1582-3, the town paid thirty shillings to the Queen's players for their performance, sixteen shillings and eight pence to the earl of Oxford's, and only ten shillings to Lord Stafford's.<sup>89</sup> An analysis of payments made to several noble companies at Gloucester of the same year also indicates that a patron's local connection influenced the size of the official reward: Lord Chandos' players received better rewards (twenty shillings) than the earl of Oxford's men (sixteen shillings and eight pence, as mentioned above), for Chandos, though enjoying lower standing than Oxford in national hierarchy, lived at nearby Sudeley Castle and represented the county in the Parliament.<sup>90</sup>

Rank and connection could not only influence the size of payments given to the company, they sometimes decided the number of performances that a company was

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<sup>88</sup> Giles E. Dawson (ed.), Records of plays and players in Kent, 1456-1642 (London, 1965), xviii. One more thing worthy of mention is that the patron's status could not only influence the size of the reward received by the company, but, in many cases, determine whether a company could perform in a town and how long could they play. Leicester in 1582, for example, passed an ordinance forbidding any performance except that of entertainers of 'the Quenes maiesters; or the Lordes of the Privye counsall.' And Gloucester, as mentioned above, allowed the Queen's Men to play three times over three days, players whose patron held at least the rank of baron to play twice over two days, and all other players to play but once. See Greenfield, 'Touring', p.256.

<sup>89</sup> Greenfield, ibid., p.256.

<sup>90</sup> A. Douglas and P. Greenfield (eds.), REED, Cumberland, Westmorland, Gloucestershire, (Toronto, 1986), p.308. Greenfield, ibid., pp.256-7.

allowed to present. At Norwich, for example, Lords Willoughby's and Beauchamp's players were allowed to play 'vntill wensdaye next' if 'behauinge them selves well & Keping mete & convenient howers'; whereas Lord of Huntington's players were only allowed to play 'one daye & not vppon the Saboath daye.'<sup>91</sup> Gloucester Common Council had made their principles even more manifest. In 1580, the Council announced that

'the Queenes maiestes Players to be allowed to playe three interludes or playes within three dayes or vnder. At euery one tyme of their comminge to or beinge within this Citie/ and no more/ nor oftener// And the players of any subiecte beinge a baron of the parliamente or of higher callinge or degree to be allowed to playe ij playes or interludes in twoe dayes or vnder at every [one] tyme of their comminge to or within this Cities and noe moore nor oftener./ And any other subiectes players vnder the degree of a Baron of the parliament and beinge allowed by the statutes and Lawes of the Realme to keape or have players to be allowed to playe but one playe or interlude in one daye at every one tyme of there comminge to or bing within this Cities and noe more nor oftener...'<sup>92</sup>

In fact, as Suzanne Westfall points out, the criteria of payments were founded more upon the 'quality of the patron' than on the 'quality of the players or their text.'<sup>93</sup> This fact is useful for our purposes since the payment received by a company clearly becomes a good indicator of the patron's status and his connection with the locality. In other words, if a systematic survey of payments to various companies can be established, the hierarchy of the patrons 'perceived by the locals' will emerge, and tracing the influence sphere of the patrons become more achievable.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> David Galloway (ed.), REED, Norwich 1540-1642, p.109. Cf. Greenfield, ibid., p.255.

<sup>92</sup> REED, Cumberland, Westmorland, Gloucestershire, p.307. Cf. Greenfield, ibid., p.255.

<sup>93</sup> Westfall, Patrons and Performance, p.132.

<sup>94</sup> As mentioned above, only official reward, which is the major source of the following discussion, can be more faithfully traced. This fact although is a disadvantage when trying to calculate the income of travelling players, turns out to be an advantage for our purpose, for as civic officials were conscious of the political implication behind the visits of livery players, their payments to the companies reflected their concept of the political realities.

It is in practice unfeasible and unnecessary to put all acting companies on a very long list ranking their rewards. On the one hand, the list would be too long to be indicative; on the other, and more importantly, not all troupes produced sufficient records to sustain such an analysis. This difficulty, however, does not mean that significant comparison on revenues can not be achieved; on the contrary, a quite indicative general picture can be drawn if players' payments are examined not by individual troupes, but by the type of their patron (royal, noble, or local). Graph 2 shows the average payments received by royal, noble, and local players in each decade. But before a more detailed discussion of the chart is given, principles of selection shall firstly be explained.

Two kinds of entries are excluded from our calculation: payments made for more than one company are dismissed, because the genuine amount paid to the troupe cannot be identified; and entries containing incomplete or ambiguous rewards are also excluded, to make the reckoning as accurate as possible. Several explanations should also be given concerning those entries included in our calculation. Firstly, the amount paid to players was sometimes recorded as expenses (such as payments for food or wine). As rewards to players could appear in the form of either money or goods, payments for expenses are included in our computation. Secondly, the amount paid to a company sometimes contains rewards for more than one performance. A payment of £2 made to Pembroke's players at Bristol in 1596-7,

for instance, was to reward their 'playinge twice before master maior.'<sup>95</sup> As average payment received by a company for a single production is the basic unit of our comparison, the rewards of these records are divided by the number of performances given. And finally, payments made to companies for non-performance are included, because the amount given usually reflected the payment the company could expect from its performance.

There is one last thing that should be mentioned before a general discussion of payments is pursued; that is the continuity of records. The availability of records in different decades and areas are not identical. Generally speaking, documents of later date or of more accessible regions preserved more continuous and complete accounts; whereas records of the earlier period or preserved in more remote districts are very often fragmentary.<sup>96</sup> As the availability of records can hardly be quantitatively measured, a very accurate calculation is not possible. However, this defect, though unavoidable, is not fatal, because it is the average, not the complete, payments that we are looking for. In other words, although the incompleteness of records makes the analysis less perfect, the result can still be fairly suggestive.

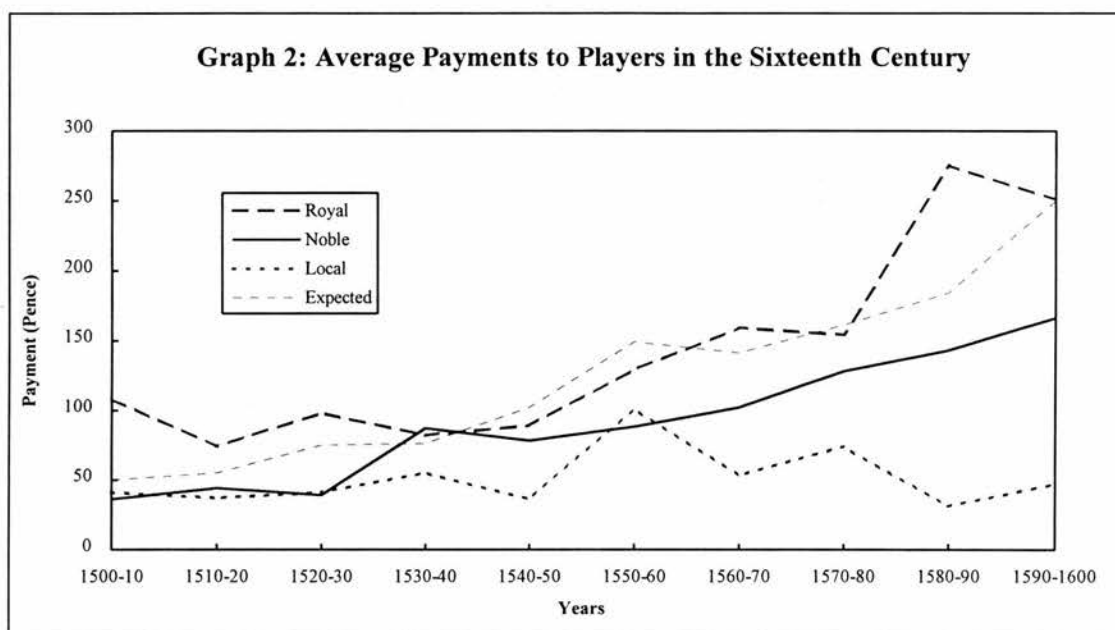
Graph 2 shows the average payments received by royal, noble, and local acting

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<sup>95</sup> Mark Pikington (ed.), REED, Bristol (Toronto, 1997), p.150.

<sup>96</sup> This of course is only a general statement; to understand the records extant in specific areas, one must consult studies of regional records. In our case, the best guide for regional existing documents is the introduction made by each of the REED editors before their collections.

companies in each decade of the sixteenth century.<sup>97</sup> Generally speaking, the rewards received by royal and noble companies increased as time went by, whereas there was no obvious growth of payments to local troupes.<sup>98</sup> The graph also reveals that royal players were usually the best rewarded ones; noble troupes received less; and local ones were paid least of all. This hierarchy of payments well sustains our argument above that players were generally rewarded according to the ranks of their patrons.



What is worthy of notice is that average payments given to noble companies, which in the first decade of the century was of approximately the same level as that of local ones, increased remarkably in the 1530s, the period of the Reformation. If this phenomenon is considered with the fact that entry numbers of noble companies

<sup>97</sup> For more details, see appendix 2.

<sup>98</sup> The average payment of local companies is exceptionally high (even higher than that of the noble ones), that is because four very generous payments were made. For more discussion of these payments, see chapter 3.



also increased impressively in the 1530s (from 30 in the 1520s to 89 in the 1530s, and reaching its first peak, 106 entries, in the 1540s),<sup>99</sup> one can conclude that the rise of noble companies from the 1530s had much to do with the religious movement. Patronage of acting companies could have become more popular amongst the peers, because players would function as the mouthpiece of their master; by this way, a nobleman could express or even promote his religious attachment without causing much offence.<sup>100</sup>

Apart from the hierarchy of payments, graph 2 also shows how payments to players fluctuated relative to price inflation. The fourth line in the graph, using 50*d* (the average payment to all players in the decade) as the standard reward in the 1500s, represents the amount that players could expect if their payments increased commensurate with the inflation rate.<sup>101</sup> The graph reveals that payments to royal companies generally matched, if not exceeded, the expected amount; whereas rewards to noble companies, apart from the 1530s, were usually lower than the expected figures. Although revenues of noble players were far from satisfactory, noble companies were not the ones suffering most from these inflationary conditions. Local troupes were the most deprived group of players. As shown in the chart,

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<sup>99</sup> For more discussion of the changes of the entry number of playing companies, see chapters 2 and 3.

<sup>100</sup> Livery companies' role in the Reformation is an interesting but complicated question, waiting for further investigation. It will be carried on in our discussion on playing companies' repertory in the later part of this chapter, and in chapters 4 and 5 of this thesis.

<sup>101</sup> The inflation rate is based on the index of 'price of a composite unit of foodstuffs' provided in R.B. Outhwaite's *Inflation in Tudor and Early Stuart England*, 2nd edition (London, 1982), p.12. The overall average payments of players generally match the expected rewards. See appendix 2.

payments to local companies did not rise as expected and their incomes suffered in real terms over the course of the period.

If 50*d*, the average payment given to players in the 1500s, was the sufficient amount for a troupe to perform, or to survive, royal companies apparently continued to receive such reasonable payments in the following decades. Compared to royal players, noble actors were less fortunate: apart from the 1530s, they never gained the amount they should have been rewarded; the payments they received were mostly lower than the expected ones. The revenue of noble companies, however, did not fail the players much, for it basically increased accordingly with the inflation rate (as the two lines in graph 2 are generally parallel). This unfortunately was not the case of local players, who did not receive larger rewards as time went by, their income decreasing in real terms. The activity of local players declined rapidly after the 1520s (83 entries in that decade, 49 in the 1530s, 13 in the 1540s, and never rose to more than 30 entries until the end of the century).<sup>102</sup> Many factors contributed to the phenomenon; financial difficulty was likely to be one.<sup>103</sup>

## **vii. Players and Local Authorities**

Greenfield, reconstructing the touring of Lord Berkeley's Men, argues that eighteen shillings was the amount received by the company during the week between 7 and 13

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<sup>102</sup> See appendix 1.

<sup>103</sup> For more discussion of the decline of local companies, see chapter 3.

October 1584. Eighteen shillings is much less than the minimum expenses of forty-two shillings calculated by Ingram. The example of Lord Berkeley's Men strongly suggests that official payment was only part of, if not a small part of, the total revenue of a company. Apart from official rewards, players also needed unofficial incomes, which were most possibly collected by passing the hat at the end of the performance, to maintain the troupe.<sup>104</sup> Official performances were, as Greenfield suggests, only the 'tip of the iceberg'; the majority of presentations were given before unrecorded popular audiences.<sup>105</sup> To understand better the operation of the acting business, it is necessary to have a thorough investigation of players' action in the location they visited.

The first thing to be discussed is the procedure of performance. When a troupe approached a town, they had first to apply for the permission of the mayor or town officials to play.<sup>106</sup> Their first play was usually held before the mayor and was therefore called 'the mayor's play'. The best known description of such a mayor's play is the one recorded by R. Willis at Gloucester's Bothall in the 1570s:

'In the City of Gloucester the manner is (as I think it is in other like corporations) that when Players of Enterludes come to the towne, they first attend the Mayor to enforme him what noble-mans servant they are, and so to get license for their publike playing; and if the Mayor like the Actors, or would shew respect to their Lord and Master, he appointed them to play their first play before himself and the Aldermen and common Counsell of the City; and that is called the Mayors play, where every one that will come in without money, the Mayor giving the players a

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<sup>104</sup> In the case of London stage or that of great companies, such as the Queen's Men, an admission fee collected at the door was applied. This however was mainly of the later period.

<sup>105</sup> Greenfield, 'Touring', p.255. Greenfield has made an attempt to calculate how unofficial income of Lord Berkeley's Men might have made their touring expenses and income meet. See *ibid.*, p.256.

<sup>106</sup> This condition has become national law in 1559. REED, Cumberland, Westmorland, Gloucestershire, p.252.

reward as hee thinks fit to shew respect unto them.'<sup>107</sup>

After the mayor's play, the company was supposed to find profitable venues to perform; market places, public halls, and sometimes parish churches could all be good alternatives.

Apart from public places, private households could also be venues for performance. Tudor noblemen not only maintained their own troupes; they also received visiting performers in their households. The fifth earl of Northumberland, for example, usually rewarded players of other peers between Christmas and Candlemas.<sup>108</sup> Players of the Lord of Wrisell<sup>109</sup> and those from Writhill attended the dinner of duke of Buckingham's household on the feast of the Nativity and the Epiphany in 1507-8.<sup>110</sup> Mayors and local gentry also received performers at their houses. The mayor of Exeter, for instance, had the acting companies of the countess of Devon, Lord Fitz Warin, and that of the lord chief justice perform in his house between 1526 and 1528; and John Wighton at Cambridge and William Frost of Exeter received players at their own residences in 1490-1 and 1503-4 respectively.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.362-3. The rewards given by the mayor were those we found in the chamberlains' accounts. Willis did not tell us the precise date of the performance. However, based on his own description ('my father tooke me with him and made mee stand betweene his leggs'), the REED editors believe that the performance likely took place during the 1570s.

<sup>108</sup> 'The Northumberland Household Book', p.254.

<sup>109</sup> The Castle of Wressle was the estate of the Percy family. The Lord referred in the record was therefore the earl of Northumberland.

<sup>110</sup> Henry Ellis, 'A letter from John Gage, *Esq.* Director, to Sir Henry Ellis, Secretary, accompany extracts from the Household Book of Edward Stafford, Duke of Buckingham', in *Archaeologia*, 25 (1834), pp.321, 325.

<sup>111</sup> John Wasson (ed.), *REED, Devon* (Toronto, 1986), pp.115, 116, 127. Alan H. Nelson (ed.), *REED, Cambridge* (Toronto, 1989), p.69.

How were players usually received by the locality? In the first half of the sixteenth century, travelling players appeared to be welcomed by both the secular and religious authorities; this was probably because they provided entertainment, which was not otherwise available. Alan Somerset, surveying local authorities' reception of travelling players in Shakespeare's lifetime (1563/4-1616/7), found that 3119 out of the 3279 entries of touring professional entertainers (95.12%) implied that the company was received 'positively'.<sup>112</sup> Although Somerset's study was based on records of the later period, his conclusion proves to be applicable to our period. Among the entire 1512 entries of 1530-80, only nine cases show that players failed to carry out their performance.

The relationship between visiting players and local authorities however was not always congenial; disputes, especially those over acting permission, arose from time to time. In April 1543, for instance, four players of Lord Warden were put into the jail for performing 'contrary to an ordre taken by the Mayour on that behalff.'<sup>113</sup> In May 1546, five earl of Bath's servants, who had played 'lewde playes in the Suburbes in London', 'were committed to 'the Counter in London', and later set free

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<sup>112</sup> According to Somerset, 'positive response' means players performance was allowed, rewarded, or otherwise welcomed. Somerset, "How Chances It They Travel?" *Provincial Touring, Playing Places, and the King's Men*, *Shakespeare Survey*, 47, pp.49-50. Somerset's study was mainly to refute the conclusion made by G.E. Bentley, who in his *The Profession of Player in Shakespeare's Time, 1590-1642* (Princeton, 1984) argued that performers were welcomed only twice in fifteen attempts.

<sup>113</sup> J.R. Dasent *et al.* (eds.), *Acts of the Privy Council of England*, 32 vols., new series (1890-1964), vol.1, pp.108-9.

on condition that they would not play 'without special licence of the Councail.'<sup>114</sup> And in June 1583, the earl of Worcester's players were in dispute with the Norwich authorities. The company arrived at Norwich on 7 June. Instead of granting them a permission to perform, the town gave the troupe 26s 8d for not acting. The players, ignoring the agreement, performed in the house of their host. This action eventually annoyed the Norwich corporation, who later rendered the verdict that 'the company should never again receive reward in Norwich, and should presently depart the town on pain of imprisonment.'<sup>115</sup>

Certainly, as these examples show, though players were usually received 'positively', the attitude of local authorities towards them could vary greatly. Coventry, for example, was always benevolent to players: many companies were rewarded there annually, and no restriction over playing was enforced even in the time when hostility towards itinerant players was widespread. Norwich, on the contrary, was more severe to players. In the 1584-5, they began to pay players not to perform, and in 1588-9, a ban on performing was passed.<sup>116</sup>

Why did local authorities react so differently towards players? Or, to put it in a

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<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.405-7.

<sup>115</sup> Chambers, *ES*, vol.2, p.221. Other companies also experienced trouble with the Norwich authority. John Mufford, Lord Beauchamp's player, for example, was committed to prison for violating the prohibition order of the mayor of Norwich. See Murray, *English Dramatic Companies*, vol.2, pp.25, 337.

<sup>116</sup> This ban however was short-lived. The city started to grant licences to perform for specific period, and to take action against those who out-stayed their official permission. See Greenfield, 'Touring', p.262. Cf. *REED, Norwich*, pp.81, 91.

more concrete way, why did some locations detest the visit of acting companies? The letter of John Hatcher, Vice Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, to William Cecil, Lord Burghley, provides some clues. On 21 June 1579-80, Hatcher explained to Cecil that a troupe of Oxford's players, who brought references from both Cecil and the earl of Sussex, asked to perform in the University. After consulting with 'the heddes and other *videlicet*' of the University, the Vice Chancellor declined the request:

'consydering & Ponderinge, that the seede, the cause and the feare of the pestilence is not yet vanished & gone, this hote tyme of ye yeare; this mydsommer fayre tyme having confluence oute of all countries as well of infected as not, ye commencement tyme at hande, which required rather delligence in stodie then dissolutenesse in playes; and also yat of late wee denyed ye lyke to ye right Honorable ye Lord of Leicester his servantes, and speciallie for yat all assemblies in open places be expressly forbidden in this vniuersities and towne or within fyue myles compasse by her Maiesties covncelles letters to ye Vicechancler 30 Octobris 1575...'

The company was, in the end, given twenty shillings for their expense.<sup>117</sup> Hatcher's letter reveals that fear of plague and the University's protective attitude towards students were the reasons prevented players from performing.<sup>118</sup>

Other records show that the time or occasion that a company arrived could also affect the attitudes of the authorities. For instance, the earl of Oxford's players were asked not to give a play in Southwark, Surrey, for it was the time between the death

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<sup>117</sup> REED, *Cambridge*, pp.290-1. It will be interesting to investigate further why was the company of 'Oxford' brought with them not the letter from their master, but that from Lord Burghley and Sussex. For more discussion, see ch.6.

<sup>118</sup> Worcester's men was refused by the Norwich authority in 1583 for the same reason. In fact, Somerset points out that when the epidemics struck the country, many provincial boroughs prevented troupes from acting for fear of infection. Shrewsbury, for instance, forbade any visitor or wares from infected places to come within four miles of the town gate, unless the travellers and goods had been away from the polluted places for at least two months. See Chambers, *ES*, vol.2, p.221; Somerset, 'How Chances It They Travel?', p.50.



and burial of Henry VIII.<sup>119</sup> And King Edward's players were declined by Norwich to perform in 1549-50, for 'the tyme than requeryd by reason of the late commocion.'<sup>120</sup> The time at which players visited a site certainly influenced whether a company was welcome or not. Generally speaking, acting companies played an important role in household celebrations, such as birthdays and marriages; they therefore could always secure a warm reception if calling at the right time. The Northumberland household, for example, customarily celebrated Twelfth Night, and the earl usually received foreign entertainers during the Christmas season.<sup>121</sup>

Players were usually welcome to household festivities. This however was less the case when they visited a town or city with its own festival tradition. Bristol was one of these locations. In 1540-1, a company of John Russell, Lord Privy Seal, visited the town, and had their request to perform turned down on the grounds that it was on the eve of Saint James and the residents were busy.<sup>122</sup> The Canterbury records also convey a similar message. Among the 149 Canterbury records, only 19

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<sup>119</sup> See the letter from Stephen Gardiner, Bishop of Winchester, to Sir William Paget on February 5, 1547 in Patrick Fraser Tytler (ed.), England under the Reign of Edward VI and Mary: with the Contemporary History of Europe (London, 1839), vol.1, pp.21-2. Gardiner's letter shows that the company showed little respect to Master Acton, justice of peace, who advised them not to perform. See ibid..

<sup>120</sup> REED Norwich, p.26.

<sup>121</sup> Percy, 'The Northumberland Household Book', pp.253-4. Cf. Westfall, Patrons and Performance, pp.128, 132.

<sup>122</sup> REED, Bristol, p.51. For the public ceremony of Bristol, see ibid., xxvii-xxxi.



of them provide dates in the entry;<sup>123</sup> they are January (11, 16, 28, 31), February (2),<sup>124</sup> March (2, 17, 27, 30), May (5), June (10), August (10, 20), September (21, 27), November (1), December (3, 5, 7). If comparing these dates with that of the (three) most important feasts of the city (July 7, September 29, and December 29),<sup>125</sup> we find that there was no clear connection between the visit of playing companies and the civic festivities.<sup>126</sup>

The Bristol and Canterbury stories suggest that the time of civic festivities, though the most exciting seasons of the year, were not the best time for players to visit. Bristol authorities declined the performance of Russell's players because they were 'busy with their own celebration'; and Canterbury did not expect travelling companies to join the festivities. Certainly, as these two cases reveal, players were not expected in the most festive season of the year. One could presume that it was because the nature of players' performance did not fit into the contents of the festivals; the waits of London, for example, regularly came to Canterbury to lead the

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<sup>123</sup> It is more likely that these dates given were the days of payment, not of performance. But, as players tended to stay at a place for just a short period of time to maximise their profits, it is reasonable to assume that the performing dates were not very far from that of payments.

<sup>124</sup> February 2 is Candlemas.

<sup>125</sup> The three major feasts of Canterbury were the Translation of St. Thomas Becket (7 July), Michaelmas (29 September), and the Martyrdom of St. Thomas Becket (29 December), each of which lasted for nine days. See James Gibson (ed.), 'REED, Kent' (forthcoming), and his 'General Introduction'.

<sup>126</sup> Only the waits of London came to Canterbury to lead the process of St Thomas regularly.

St Thomas procession.<sup>127</sup> But another reasonable explanation is that travelling players were excluded from these occasions because they were 'foreigners' and should not be included in the very 'local' celebrations. This assumption is not without evidence. Comparing the fluctuations of the travelling acting business and those of the city's St Thomas's Watch, we find that itinerant players were active in the city during the period in which the Watch was declining. In other words, the prosperity of 'foreign' entertainment in the city, to a certain degree, was a consequence of the decline of civic identity.<sup>128</sup>

Apart from local-foreign complex, the religious attachment of a region could also influence the inhabitants' ideas of visiting players. Somerset's analysis shows that eighty-six (about 66%) of the entire 160 cases, in which players faced negative responses, belong to East Anglia: Norwich (45), Cambridge (26), and Norfolk/Suffolk (15), and these locations were centres of Puritanism.<sup>129</sup> The Puritan hostility towards drama was one reason for players' negative experience. Patrick Collinson remarks that when Puritanism first ascended in England in the early 1580s drama was eradicated by the Protestant community for its secularity and blasphemy.<sup>130</sup> Religious propaganda purveyed by the acting companies could also

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<sup>127</sup> The fact London waits were regular participant of the St. Thomas Process suggests two possibilities: first, London may not be considered by Canterbury residents as 'foreign', and second, the performing of wait was more concordant with civic celebrations.

<sup>128</sup> Further explanation on this subject will be carried on in chapter 3.

<sup>129</sup> Somerset, 'How Chances It They Travel?', p.50.

<sup>130</sup> According to Collinson, the first ascendancy of Puritanism can be dated quite precisely to 1580 in respect of its cultural impact. See his The Birthpangs of Protestant England: Religious and Cultural

have caused the prohibition of their performances. More and more evidence shows that, since the Reformation, livery players carried a polemical repertory with them in order to propagate the specific religious views of their master. The teachings promoted by the troupe sometimes were not congenial to those popular in the region or sanctioned by the authorities and this could cause the prohibition or even prosecution to the company.<sup>131</sup>

Before we leave this discussion on players' touring, there is one more point worthy of making; that is the relation between an acting company's touring route and the influential sphere of its patron. Somerset believes that the two were closely connected. For instance, the company of the Lord President of the Council of the Marches of Wales was frequently traceable in the counties under its patron's influence; while the localities visited by Leicester's Men, were strongly associated with their patron, Robert Dudley. To explain the two cases, Somerset argues that acting companies preferred visiting localities with connections with their patrons because in these localities they could usually find a welcome and therefore secure a generous reward.<sup>132</sup>

Somerset's argument is a reasonable explanation for the phenomenon. But

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Change in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries (London, 1988), p.98. Cf. the introduction of this thesis.

<sup>131</sup> For more about the polemical works carried by players and their propagandist task, see the last section of this chapter and chapters 4 and 5.

<sup>132</sup> Leicester's Men visited far less frequently (the south-west) or virtually ignored (the Welsh marches) others. See Somerset, 'How Chances It They Travel?', pp.51-2.

what is even more important is that he points out the possible connection between economic motives and political reality. From the players' point of view, visiting locations where their master enjoyed significant influence could secure good rewards. But from the patron's standpoint, having his livery company perform in his region of influence was one reason for his sustaining a troupe. Constant presence was important in maintaining influence; long absence of the household master might reduce a family's authority over the locality.<sup>133</sup> The regular appearance of an acting company, wearing the patron's livery, could supplement the need for their master's constant appearance.<sup>134</sup>

Thus, profits and the reputation of their master, as Greenfield remarks, were the two major incentives for players' touring.<sup>135</sup> They also explained why livery companies preferred to visit locations under their patron's influence. However, after the Reformation, there were many companies, such as the duchess of Suffolk's players, who abandoned their home counties, venturing to unfamiliar, or even unprofitable, regions. The motives mentioned earlier apparently can not explain such unusual actions.<sup>136</sup> Propaganda seems to be the only acceptable explanation. That is,

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<sup>133</sup> The Percy family's influence in the north, for example, was greatly reduced because of the lengthy absence of the earl from 1576. See G.R. Batho, 'The Percies and Alnwick Castle, 1557-1632', *Archaeologia Aeliana*, 4th ser., 35 (1957), pp.48-63. Cf. Lawrence Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy*, (Oxford, 1965), pp.476-7.

<sup>134</sup> John Russell, the first earl of Bedford, for instance, used his acting company to establish his influence in the west. See chapter 5. For more discussion of the connection between the two, see chapters 2 and 3.

<sup>135</sup> Greenfield, 'Touring', p.254.

<sup>136</sup> For more of Suffolk's company, see chapter 4.

players were enjoined by their patron to promote certain opinions, and thus they had to leave their usual touring routes, heading to the ‘unconverted’ regions. To understand better the propagandist assignment of acting companies, it is necessary to undertake a general survey of the content of their performance.<sup>137</sup>

### **viii. Repertory and Performance**

R. Willis’ account of a play performed at Gloucester in the 1570s gives us a flavour of the contents of provincial performance provided by itinerant players.

‘The play was called (the Cradle of security,) wherein was personated a King or some great Prince with his Courtiers of severall kinds, amongst which three Ladies were in speciall grace with him; and they keeping him in delights and pleasures, drew him from his graver Counsellors, hearing of Sermons, and listning to good counsell, and admonitions, that in the end they got him to lye downe in a cradle upon the stage, where these three ladies joyning in a sweet song rocked him asleepe, that he snorted againe, and in the meane time closely conveyed under the cloaths where withall he was covered, a vizard like a swines snout upon his face, with three wire chaines fastned thereunto, the other end whereof being holden severally by those three Ladies, who fall to singing againe, and then discovered his face, that the spectators might see how they had transformed him, going on with their singing whilst all this was acting, there came forth of another doore at the farthest end of the stage, two old men, the one in blew with a Serjeant at Armes, his mace on his shoulder, the other in red with a drawn sword in his hand, and leaning with the other hand upon the others shoulder, and so they two went along in a soft pace round about the skirt of the Stage, till at last they came to the Cradle, when all the Court was in greatest jollity, and then the foremost old man with his Mace stroke a fearfull blow upon the Cradle; whereat all the Courtiers with the three Ladies and the vizard all vanished; and the desolate Prince starting up bare faced, and finding himselfe thus sent for to judgement, made a lamentable complaint of his miserable case, and so was carried away by wicked spirits. This Prince did personate in the morall, the wicked of the world; the three Ladies, Pride, Covetousness, and Luxury, the two old men, the end of the world, and the last judgement.’<sup>138</sup>

‘The Cradle of Security’ was a moral interlude, which tells the story of ‘a prince who

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<sup>137</sup> More discussion of propagandist troupes can be found in chapters 4 and 5.

<sup>138</sup> REED, *Cumberland, Westmorland, Gloucestershire*, p.363.

allowed himself to be diverted from the serious things of life, and was carried away by an evil spirit as a penalty for his foolishness.’<sup>139</sup> Such a complete account of a play, like *Willis*, is exceptional; in most cases, historical documents which plentifully record the movements of travelling players do not mention the titles of their presentations.<sup>140</sup> And on the few occasions when titles or descriptions of the plays are given, they cannot be linked to extant play texts.

Among the 1512 entries of livery players during our period, only three records, among Bristol’s Mayor’s Audits, mention the titles of the plays performed. They are ‘The Red Knight’ performed by Lord Chamberlain’s players (1575-6), ‘The Court of Comfort’ by Lord Sheffield’s players (1577-8), and ‘Myngo’ by Leicester’s players (1577-8).<sup>141</sup> According to S. Schoenbaum, ‘The Red Knight’ was a historical romance, and ‘The Court of Comfort’ probably a moral interlude. Unfortunately, all these three plays are lost and little about them is known.<sup>142</sup>

The frustrating result of our survey of play titles from records, however, is not the end of the story. Scholars still try hard to improve our knowledge of plays

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<sup>139</sup> See C.E.C. Burch, *Minstrels and Players in Southampton 1428-1635* (Southampton, 1969), p.16.

<sup>140</sup> David Bevington, *From Mankind to Marlowe: Growth of Structure in the Popular Drama of Tudor England* (Cambridge, 1962), p.13.

<sup>141</sup> The original entries are as follows: ‘Item paid to my Lord Chamberlayns players at thend of their play called the red Knight before master mayer and thaldermen in the yell hall the sum of xx s.’; ‘Item paid to my Lord Sheffildes players at thend of their play in the yeld hall before master mayer and the Aldremen, the play was called the court of comfort, xiiij s iiii d’; and ‘Item paid to my Lord of Leycesters Players at the end of their Play in the yeld hall before master mayer and the Aldremen and for lyngkes to geve light in the evenyng the play was called Myngo the sume of xxij s.’ See *REED, Bristol*, pp.112, 115, 116.

<sup>142</sup> Schoenbaum (ed.), *Annals of the English Drama, 975-1700* (London, 1964), pp.44-7.

performed by itinerant companies and are not without some achievements. Bevington, for instance, found out that the type of play in which travelling players excelled was 'incontestably the morality or the Biblical redaction containing elements of moral allegory.' 'The Cradle of Security' performed at Gloucester was such a moral play, and when the court interluders accompanied Princess Margaret to Scotland in 1503 for the royal marriage, they performed 'a Morallite' after dinner.<sup>143</sup>

Although few contemporary descriptions of play performance are available, extant play texts and titles are still suggestive; they show that many plays of the period were dealing with controversial political or religious issues. As early as the 1520s, courtiers of Henry VIII were making use of theatrical performance to convey important political messages. Thomas Wolsey was probably the first to exploit the genre systematically. In December 1521, he entertained the Imperial ambassadors, with 'many sumptuous and gorgious disguisinges, enterludes and bankettes made in the same season.'<sup>144</sup> And in the following June, the visiting Emperor Charles V and his entourage were presented with a 'disguising or play' which showed 'a proud horse which would not be tamed nor brideled, but amities sent prudence and policie which tamed him and force and puyssaunce brideled him.'<sup>145</sup> These dramatic entertainments of course were not carried out for amusement only; they were subtle

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<sup>143</sup> David Bevington, From Mankind to Marlowe, p.13. Cf. Chambers, ES, vol.2, p.78.

<sup>144</sup> Edward Hall, The Union of the Two Noble and Illustrious Houses of Lancashire and York, (London, 1809), p.628 (hereafter Union); Greg Walker, Plays of Persuasion: Drama and Politics at the Court of Henry VIII (Cambridge, 1991), p.16.

<sup>145</sup> Hall, ibid., p.641; Walker, ibid., p.16. According to Schoenbaum, the play was called 'Freindship, Prudence, and Might' ('The Triumph of Amity') written by William Cornish. See Schoenbaum (ed.), Annals of the English Drama, 975-1700, pp.22-3.



forms through which the English monarch and courtiers could show their good will and commitment to Charles V in his invasion of France. As Edward Hall perceived, there were strongly suggestive messages behind the fable presented before the Emperor:

‘This horse was meant by the frenche Kyng, and amitie by the King of England and themperor and the other prisoners were their counsail and power.’<sup>146</sup>

Wolsey’s message to the Emperor was significant, for the Anglo-Imperial amity had suffered suspicions on the Emperor’s side; Charles’s ambassador in Venice, Alonso Sanchez, and his representative in Rome, Juan Manuel, had both suggested to their master that Henry’s commitment to the enterprise against France was at best ‘lukewarm’.<sup>147</sup>

In December 1528, after England had broken up this Anglo-Imperial co-operation and turned to an alliance with France, Wolsey again sponsored a series of French farces performed before the French ambassador, du Bellay, to confirm the new commitment. In the plays, Wolsey revealed his sympathy for the French cause. Du Bellay later reported to his master:

‘[I think] Wolsey would not be well pleased if I did not tell you of his causing farces to be played in French with great display, saying, in conclusion, that he does not wish anything to be here which is not French in deed and word.’<sup>148</sup>

Wolsey’s exploitation of drama as a means of political expression was soon adopted by other courtiers in a less elaborated style. In early January 1531, Thomas Boleyn,

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<sup>146</sup> Hall, *ibid.*, p.641; Walker, *ibid.*, p.16.

<sup>147</sup> Walker, *ibid.*, p.17.

<sup>148</sup> *Ibid.*, p.19.



earl of Wiltshire, and Thomas Howard, duke of Norfolk, collaborated in the production of an interlude presented before the French ambassador, Claude la Guische. The piece, according to the report of Eustace Chapuys, the Spanish ambassador, was a farce depicting 'the Cardinal (Wolsey) going down to Hell.'<sup>149</sup> La Guische apparently was not happy with the performance, and he 'much blamed the earl, and still more the Duke [of Norfolk] for his ordering the said farce to be printed.'<sup>150</sup>

When Edward VI succeeded to the throne in 1547, he demonstrated his anti-papal sentiments through the coronation revels, and such performances were carried out frequently during the young king's reign.<sup>151</sup> Moreover, the employment of drama as means to assault Catholicism was not confined to the court, but it was fairly widespread around the realm. In 1551, the Venetian ambassador, Daniel Barbaro, reported to the Senate that the destruction of the abbeys was a mischief done by the English to the pope 'besides their demonstrations of the contempt for him, in paintings, comedies, and in all their amusements.'<sup>152</sup> The Mass and the Eucharist

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<sup>149</sup> Wolsey fell and died in 1530.

<sup>150</sup> Calendar of Letters, Dispatches, and State Papers, Relating to the Negotiations between England and Spain, Preserved in the Archives of Vienna, Brussels, Simancas and Elsewhere, ed. G.A. Bergenroth *et al*, 13 vols (1862-1916), vol.4 (2), no.615 (hereafter Calendar of State Papers, Spanish). See also Walker, Plays of Persuasion, p.20 for more discussion of the background and occasion.

<sup>151</sup> Albert Feuillerat, Documents relating to Revels in the Time of King Edward VI and Queen Mary (Louvain, 1914), pp.5, 20, 25, 256, 266, 304. Cf. Harold C. Gardiner, Mysteries' End: An Investigation of the Last Days of the Medieval Religious Stage (New Haven, 1946), p.57

<sup>152</sup> Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts Existing in the Archives and Collections of Venice, and in other Libraries of Northern Italy, 9 vols. (London, 1864-98), vol.5 p.347. (Hereafter Calendar of State Papers, Venice).

were also under attack; people 'made rhymes, and plays, and jests of it.'<sup>153</sup> A Protestant exile in Mary's time recalled the 'blissful' period of Edward's reign, remarking that in that time 'God's word in that had the prize and bore the bell away throughout the whole land...With God's word was every man's mouth occupied; of that were all songs, interludes and plays made.'<sup>154</sup>

Anti-papal drama did not die out under Mary's reign, but, as one might expect, encountered active suppression by the government. One example well illustrating Mary's policy is the prosecution of Sir Francis Leek's players. In April 30, 1556, the Privy Council wrote a letter to the earl of Shrewsbury, the Lord President of the North, informing him that

'certain leud persons, to the number of six or seven in a company, naming themselves to be servants unto Sir Frauncis Leke, and wearing his livery and badge on their sleeves, have wandered about those north parts, and represented certain plays and enterludes, containing very naughty and seditious matter touching the King and Queen's Majesties, and the state of the realm, and to the slaunder of Christ's true Catholic Church, contrary to al good order, and to the manifest contempt of Almighty God, and dangerous example of others.'

The Council asked the earl

'to give order forthwith to al the justices of the peace within your rule, that from henceforth they do in no wise suffer any playes, enterludes, songs, or any such like pastimes, whereby the people may any ways be stirred to disorder; to be used by any maner of persons, or under any colour or pretence, within the limits of your charge.'

As to the company and their patron, Shrewsbury was instructed

'not only to write unto Sir Frauncis Leke, willing him to cause the said players, that

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<sup>153</sup> John Strype, Ecclesiastical Memorials, Relating Chiefly to Religion, and the Reformation of it, and the Emergencies of the Church of England under King Henry VIII, King Edward VI, and Queen Mary I 3 vols. (Oxford, 1822), vol.2, pt.1, p.126. See also Gardiner, Mysteries' End, p.58 n.51.

<sup>154</sup> Gardiner, ibid., p.57.

name themselves his servants, to be sought for, and sent forth with unto you, to be further examined, and ordered according to their deserts; but also to give him strait charge and commandment in their Majesties names, that he suffer not any of his servants hereafter to go about the countries, and use any plays, songs, or enterludes, as he will answer for the contrary.'

And to prevent any case of this sort arising in the future, the lord

'shal do well to give the justices of peace in charge, to se them apprehended out of hand, and punished as vagabonds, by vertue of the statute made against loitering and idle persons.'<sup>155</sup>

This Privy Council letter clearly demonstrates Mary's determination to suppress controversial drama. In the first place, the earl of Shrewsbury was instructed to prosecute the company whose performance defied the Queen, the King, and the Catholic Church. Further actions were then demanded to prevent any case of the sort happening again.

Anti-Catholic drama revived soon after Elizabeth's ascendance. In the January of 1559, an anti-papal farce was being carried out by the court interluders;<sup>156</sup> and the Christmas revels of 1559/60 at Westminster contained an elaborate spectacle debunking Catholic prelates as crows, asses, and wolves.<sup>157</sup> This altered religious atmosphere was acutely sensed by foreign ambassadors. In February 6, 1559, Il Schifanoia, in his letter to Ottaviano Vivaldino, the Mantuan ambassador, vividly described an outbreak of anti-Catholic polemic in London after the new Queen's ascendance.<sup>158</sup> He reported that, even before any religious changes were settled in

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<sup>155</sup> Strype, Ecclesiastical Memorials, vol.3, pt.2, pp.413-4. \_

<sup>156</sup> The play is probably 'Papists' listed in Schoenbaum's table. See appendix. See also White, Theatre and Reformation, p.56.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., p.58.

the Parliament, in London,

‘there are yet many frivolous and foolish people who daily invent plays in derision of the Catholic faith, of the Church, of the clergy, and of the religion, and, by placards posted at the corners of the streets (*per gli cantoni*), they invite people to the taverns, to see these representations, taking money from their audience.’<sup>159</sup>

The Venetian ambassador, Paulo Tiepolo, also reported to the Senate that the ‘demonstrations and performance of plays by the London populace (*dal popolo in London*) in the hostels and taverns’ were so ‘vituperative and abominable’ that it was surprising that they should have for long been tolerated. He remarked that there was a play in which ‘King Philip, the late Queen of England, and Cardinal Pole’ were presented and derided; these people ‘did not spare any living person,’ and they said ‘whatever they fancied about them.’<sup>160</sup>

This anti-Catholic propaganda also spread to locations such as Canterbury, Ipswich, and Shrewsbury. In Canterbury, for example, the performance was drawn into the rekindled city conflict between the radicals and the conservatives. In May 1560, John Bale prepared a play (probably his ‘King Johan’) for alderman George May, a city Protestant sympathiser. Bale’s affiliation with May soon made him the target of the rival party. Richard Okeden, son of a alderman, retorted that ‘Mr Bale does well to occupy himself with such trumpery and speaking against friars, yet the

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<sup>158</sup> Schifanoia, a Mantuan resident in London was in the service of Sir Thomas Tresham, Prior of the Order of St John of Jerusalem in England.

<sup>159</sup> *Calendar of State Papers, Venice*, vol.7, no.18, p.27. This account shows how a theatrical performance was carried out: the posters circulated, audience gathered, and money (payments) collected.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, no.69.

knave himself was a friar.’<sup>161</sup> The new religious atmosphere was perceived even in remote Lancashire. In his Visitation Articles, Cuthbert Scott, bishop of Chester, expressed his great concern with any ‘assembles or conventicles whereing is redde previe lecturs sermons [or] playes to thindrance or derysion of the Catholike faythe.’<sup>162</sup>

Certainly anti-papal drama played an important role in the repertory of touring companies. Bevington, surveying the ‘popular’ plays of the early Elizabethan period (1558-76),<sup>163</sup> found that ten out of the fourteen pieces are overtly Protestant religious interludes.<sup>164</sup> Schoenbaum’s Annals also shows that at least 47 dramatic works between 1509 and 1603 explicitly deal with, if not involve, contemporary religious or political controversy. And what is more interesting is that the first of Schoenbaum’s 47 plays appeared in 1522, and the last in 1574. In other words, his list shows that polemical plays emerged during the 1520s and declined, if not disappeared entirely, by the mid-1570s. Although the incompleteness of data makes it impossible to make a definite statement, the list still strongly suggests that drama was deeply involved in

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<sup>161</sup> Peter Clark, ‘Josias Nicholls and Religious Radicalism, 1553-1639’, Journal of Ecclesiastical History, 28:2 (April, 1977), pp.134-5. Leslie P. Fairfield, John Bale, Mythmaker for the English Reformation (Indiana, 1976), pp.144-48. For more about Bale’s confrontation with the city conservative, see Fairfield, ibid., pp.148-9. See also chapter 4 for more on John Bale.

<sup>162</sup> David George, ‘Anti-Catholic Plays, Puppet Shows, and Horse-Racing in Reformation Lancashire’, Records of Early English Drama Newsletter, 19:1 (1994), pp.15-6. In David George (ed.), REED, Lancashire (Toronto, 1991), this undated record has been assigned the date 1556-8. But George later believes that it should be dated 1588-9 instead.

<sup>163</sup> Bevington characterises ‘popular’ as being intended for professional touring troupes playing before popular audiences.

<sup>164</sup> Bevington, From Mankind to Marlowe, p.66. Cf. White, Theatre and Reformation, p.61.

the political and religious issues of the mid-Tudor period, and propaganda was likely to be one of its major functions.

A comparison between the dates of composition of these polemical plays and important contemporary issues shows that the former quite faithfully responds to the latter. The first play on Schoenbaum's list explicitly dealing with religious problems is John Ritwise's 'Heretic Luther' ('The Deliverance of the Pope'). This play, an anti-Protestant interlude, was written in 1527, when Henry VIII made up his mind to divorce Queen Katherine. To achieve his divorce, Henry had to gain a Papal dispensation. Unfortunately, the Pope, Clement VII, was then held captive by the Emperor's troops following the sack of Rome earlier in the year; Henry therefore turned to an Anglo-French alliance, which would free the Pope from Imperial influence and then secure his divorce settlement. Ritwise's play was presented on 10 November before the French ambassadors to affirm this alliance.<sup>165</sup> The playtext is lost, but Hall's description offers a glimpse of the performance.

'When the kyng and quene were set, ther was playd before them by children in the Latin tongue in maner of a Tragedy, the effect wherof was that the pope was in captivitie and the Church broughte under the foote, wherfore S. Peter appeared and put the Cardinal [Wolsey] in authoritie to bryng the pope to his libertie, and so set up the church agayn and so the Cardinall made intercession to the Kinges of Englande and of fraunce, that they take part together, and by their meanes the pope was delyvered. Then in came the french Kynges chyldren, and complayned to the Cardinal, how the Emperour kept them as hostages and wold not come to no resonable point with their father, wherfore thei desyred the Cardinal to helpe for their deliveraunce, which wrought so wyth the Kyng hys mayster and the french kyng that he brought the Emperour to a peace, and caused the two yong princes to be delyvered.'<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> What is interesting is that on 13 June of the same year, a play of similar theme called 'The Ruin of Rome' was carried out before an English embassy at the French Court. See Walker, *Plays of Persuasion*, p.18 n.31.

<sup>166</sup> Hall, *Union*, p.735. Cf. Walker, *ibid.*, p.18.

The propagandist message of the play, as Greg Walker points out, is readily apparent: it itemised the reasons for securing Papal independence and contributed to the efforts of the Cardinal for the alliance between the two countries.<sup>167</sup>

The religious policy of Henry VIII turned drastically in the early 1530s. Papal approval proved to be hopeless as Charles V continued to keep Rome under occupation. The King decided to solve the problem himself. This reversal of Henry's attitude is also reflected in our list of polemical drama. The first anti-Catholic play appeared in 1533; it is an interlude called 'Against the Cardinals', and was performed at the Court.<sup>168</sup> The piece is lost, but the title demonstrates the nature of the work clearly enough. Although no contemporary account of the occasion on which the play was performed is available, it is reasonable to assume that the interlude was produced to declare Henry's determination to marry Anne Boleyn, who was then carrying the future Princess Elizabeth.

Henry's practice was soon imitated by those outside the court. According to our list, many fulsome anti-Catholic plays were composed between 1536 and 1546; John Bale, the most important polemical playwright of the time, contributed at least fifteen examples of such work. Anti-papal drama continued to prosper under Edward's regime. The diplomat, Sir Thomas Hoby (1530-66) translated Francesco

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<sup>167</sup> Walker, *Plays of Persuasion*, pp.18-9. What is more impressive than the alliance message is that Wolsey used to play to make a case for his own indispensability. As Hall has commented, 'at this play wisemen smiled, and thought that it sounded more glorious to the Cardinall than to the matter in deede.' See Hall, *ibid.*, p.735. Also Walker, *ibid.*, p.19.

<sup>168</sup> See Appendix 3.



Negri's 'Free-Will' ('Tragedia del libero arbitrio'), which is an anti-Catholic moral; R. Wever wrote an interlude, 'Lusty Juventus'; and even the king himself wrote a play called 'The Whore of Babylon' ('De Meretrice Babylonica') to defy the old religion.<sup>169</sup>

When Mary came to power, anti-Catholic writings naturally faced governmental suppression. Her new policy is also reflected in the production of polemical drama: anti-Papal work disappears entirely from our list between 1553 and 1558. What is interesting is that the Catholic Queen seemed to have learned from her father and brother's practice, trying to turn the theatrical propaganda to her own direction. In 1553, more than twenty-five years after the first appearance of anti-Protestant drama, another pro-Catholic play was produced; it is Nicholas Udall's 'Respublica', which effectively echoed Mary's own religious attachment. The play was performed by the Boy's company in London during Christmas, which suggests that the capital well sensed the new religious atmosphere.

As demonstrated earlier, anti-Papal performances revived when Elizabeth came to the throne. Protestant morals, anti-Catholic farce and burlesque returns to our list accordingly. William Wager, for instance, wrote two Protestant morals, 'The Longer Thou Livest the More Fool Thou Art' (1559) and 'Enough Is as Good as a Feast'. And some anonymous dramatists produced anti-Catholic farce, such as 'Papists' to

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<sup>169</sup> Ibid.



defy the old religion.<sup>170</sup> Pro-Protestant drama disappears from our list completely after 1574, which probably reflects the fact that the religious controversy was generally settled by the mid-1570s and the Queen was determined not to be persuaded by her subjects on her matrimonial and succession issues.<sup>171</sup> This evidence vividly demonstrates the extent to which contemporary drama reflected its political and religious context.

The unfortunate story of Sir Francis Leek's Men, which gave such a vivid glimpse of the lives of players on the road, provides a good conclusion to this chapter. The Privy Council letter confirms our earlier discussion of itinerant players: professional acting companies, numbering of six or seven (or less),<sup>172</sup> wearing noble livery, chose one of the circuits to tour (the northern one, the case of Leek's Men). The case also points out one important fact which we are going further to explore; that is, playing companies carried polemical repertory for their patron. Although in Leek's case, the document does not tell us directly that the company carried the 'naughty', 'seditious' scripts under their patron's will, it is hard to imagine that players would have the courage to carry such 'dangerous' scripts without the consent, if not the encouragement or instruction, of their master.<sup>173</sup> The Leek's company, in

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<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> For more discussion of the end of the propagandist campaign, see chapters 5 and 6.

<sup>172</sup> Westfall argues that 3.39 is the average troupe size. See her Patrons and Performance, appendix A.

<sup>173</sup> I disagree with Westfall's argument that playing companies continued to perform Protestant plays in Mary's time to make a profit, for no profit can possibly be expected when the whole country, after the religious controversy of more than twenty years, was highly sensitive to the issue, and the lives of

other words, makes us further believe that the bond between a livery company and its patron was strong, and this strong link between players and their patron was not cut off when the troupe left the household; it continued to function, and probably function well, when the servants were on the road. What were the tasks demanded of a company by its patron when they left the household? With the basic knowledge of travelling players provided in this chapter, we are now able to carry our investigation on to the patronage of livery troupes.

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the performers could easily be in danger. See Westfall, ibid., p.137.

## Chapter 2: Patronage of Players (1): Greater Companies

Historians of theatre of the last generation tended to believe that the relationship between playing companies and their patrons was essentially nominal. E.K. Chambers, for example, argues that players would wear noble livery or badge and perform on festive occasions, but there was no economic dependence between them and their patron: players lived by their earnings from public audiences, and this financial independence gave them 'virtual autonomy' from their master.<sup>1</sup> T.W. Craik also holds similar opinions; he asserts that the patronage of players 'did not necessarily give them a sufficient salary and a continual playing place;' the major role of the patron was to give the company 'a legal status' for them to travel and to perform in many places where they could play and be paid.<sup>2</sup>

The case of Sir Francis Leek's company however suggests that the connection between the patron and his company could have been much tighter than earlier scholars believed.<sup>3</sup> And this is confirmed by the studies of more recent scholars. Ian

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<sup>1</sup> E.K. Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage, 4 vols. (Oxford, 1923), vol.1, pp.270-1.

<sup>2</sup> T.W. Craik, 'The Companies and the Repertory', in Norman Sanders, *etc.* (eds.), The Revels History of Drama in English, vol.2: 1500-1576 (London and New York, 1980), p.111. Craik also argues that as the service which players officially rendered their patrons was often very nominal, to guard against this loophole in the law, new legislation was introduced in 1572. I have different opinion from Dr Craik's. I believe that the bondage between patrons and their companies was not tightened by the royal proclamation; on the contrary, it was loosened as the establishment of London playhouses, which provided more steady incomes and performing places, had made players more independent than their predecessors of the last generation. For more discussion on the governmental control over players, and the changing nature of the profession, see chapter 6.

<sup>3</sup> For the case of Leek's players, see chapter 1.

Lancashire, for instance, points out that the ‘four men and a boy’ who performed ‘The Interlude of Youth’ might well be permanent servants in a noble household.<sup>4</sup> Greg Walker believes that the patronage of drama provided powerful individuals with an effective means to express their opinions; important figures of the court, such as Northumberland, Wolsey, and Norfolk, all used drama to propagate their views.<sup>5</sup> Peter Greenfield’s work shows that noble patrons retained their own acting troupes to spread and reaffirm their reputation; and by permitting the performance and giving a reward, civic officials or heads of household expressed their recognition of the patron’s influence and authority.<sup>6</sup> And Paul White argues that, in practice, many companies were responsible for propagating the political and religious views of their patrons.<sup>7</sup> In fact, contemporary documents also show that, even the authorities believed that patronage was more than nominal and patrons should be responsible for the behaviour of their companies. Mary’s proclamation in 1553, for example, announced:

‘her maiestie gyueth speciall charge to her nobilitie and gentilmen, as they professe to obey and regarde her maiestie, to take good order in thys behalfe wyth their seruauntes being players, that this her maiesties commaundement may be dulye kepte and obeyed.’<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> ‘The Interlude of Youth’ was written, according to Lancashire’s opinion, a date about Christmas 1513 or Shrovetide 1514, for a northern noble household (very possibly that of Henry Algernon Percy, fifth earl of Northumberland). See Ian Lancashire (ed.), Two Tudor Interludes: ‘The Interlude of Youth’, ‘Hick Scorer’ (Manchester, 1980), pp.18, 26-7.

<sup>5</sup> Greg Walker, Plays of Persuasion: Drama and Politics at the Court of Henry VIII (Cambridge, 1991), p.21.

<sup>6</sup> Peter H. Greenfield, ‘Touring’, in John D. Cox and David Scott Kastan (eds.), A New History of Early English Drama (New York, 1997), pp.257-8.

<sup>7</sup> Paul White, Theatre and Reformation: Protestantism, Patronage, and Playing in Tudor England (Cambridge, 1993), p.42.

<sup>8</sup> Quoted in Sanders (eds.), The Revels History of Drama in English, vol.2, p.28.

What in essence was the relationship between patron and company? This is the major concern of the following two chapters. But before further discussion can be carried on, it is necessary to understand first the composition of the livery players.

### **i. Category of Livery Companies**

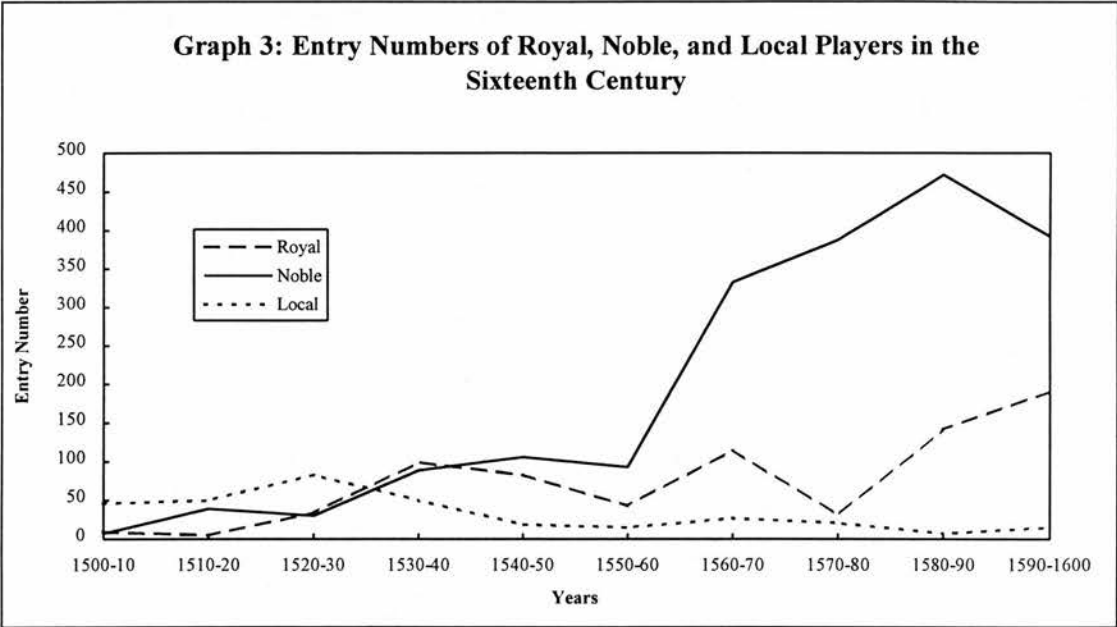
Livery players were usually recorded either by their patron or by the location from which they came. Players named by their patron can be further divided into three groups: those patronised by the royal family, by the peers, and by regional figures, such as local gentry. For convenience, in the following discussion, those troupes sponsored by the royal family are called royal players, those by the peers or regional figures, noble players, and those named by location, local players.<sup>9</sup> There are 1512 entries of acting companies in our period: 71 belong to royal players, 1009 to noble, and 132 to local.<sup>10</sup> Graph 3 shows the fluctuations of various acting companies in the sixteenth century. It reveals that noble companies began to play an important role in the touring business in the 1530s; it was then that they surpassed local players and became the second important group on the road. The difference between the royal and noble troupes in the 1530s is not large: the formers exhibit 98 entries, while the latter 88. In the 1540s, noble troupes, for the first time, exceeding their counterparts,

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<sup>9</sup> Although not all players named by their patrons were patronised by the nobility (under strict definition), players with aristocratic patrons contribute most of the entries of this group. And for the remaining patrons, although they did not held the noble title, were important regional figures; it will not distort our understanding much if put them temporarily into the category of noble patrons. More detailed discussion within the category will be carried on later in this chapter, and players of these regional patrons will be discussed together with 'local' companies in chapter 3.

<sup>10</sup> For more details, see appendix 1.

became the most important group of players; and they never lost their leading position up to the end of the century. From the graph we also see that noble players experienced a burst of growth in the 1560s. Their business continued to develop impressively in the following two decades, reaching a third peak in the 1580s and facing a slight decline in the last decade of the century.<sup>11</sup>



Categorising acting companies by their patrons, though convenient, is not the most efficient way to look at the issue, for the character of a company was more reflected in its touring range and frequency than by the nature of their patron. A better way to classify the players is therefore to divide them, according to their touring range, into two groups: greater companies and regional ones. The former include all royal and most noble troupes, whose touring covered more than one

<sup>11</sup> To see better the fluctuation of playing companies, I extend the data of Graph 3 to the entire sixteenth century.

county. The latter is composed of minor noble troupes (performance confined in one county) and all local companies. Patronage of livery players is our major concern; that of greater companies will be scrutinised in this chapter, and that of regional troupes in chapter 3.

## **ii. Royal Companies**

Royal companies were the first branch of greater troupes. Compared to the patronage of the peers, royal patronage was much less complicated. The company of court interluders was the major troupe kept by the Tudor monarchs. Some of Henry VIII's wives, such as Anne Boleyn and Jane Seymour, also kept their own acting troupes; but as the lives of Henry's queen were usually short, these troupes throw up only a limited number of performing entries.<sup>12</sup>

Tudor rulers' attitudes towards drama are reflected in the fortunes of the royal players. Henry VII was reluctant in patronage; there were only 9 entries for the royal troupe in the 1500s. Henry VIII was known for his fondness for the genre; the entries rose quite impressively during his reign (5 in the 1510s, 34 in 1520s, 99 in 1530s, and 83 in 1540s). Edward VI followed his father in the patronage of players. It was in Mary's reign that royal players experienced a more serious recession; their entry numbers dropped to 43 in the 1550s (only slightly over half of its level in the

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<sup>12</sup> For more details of royal companies, see chapter 1.

previous decade).<sup>13</sup> The royal company soon revived from their ebb, when Elizabeth came to the throne: it achieved an unprecedented success in the first decade of the new Queen's reign (115 entries). Its entry numbers then dropped dramatically to a very low level in the 1570s (31 entries), and climbed again, with the same speed, to an even higher level in the 1580s (142 entries). It ended up with a high point of 191 entries in the last decade of the century.<sup>14</sup>

### **iii. The Patronage of Greater Noble Companies**

The second group of greater companies were under noble patronage. As some minor troupes, which should be classified as regional companies, were also termed noble troupes, a more discriminating division is needed. Some explanations of the records and the principles of selection should first be given, however. There are 1009 noble entries belonging to 148 companies and 162 patrons.<sup>15</sup> Although these companies were named after their patrons, it is obvious that there were more patrons than companies. The reason why the two numbers do not match is largely because in many cases one company, especially a great company, experienced more than one

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<sup>13</sup> There were two major monarchs in the 1550s—Edward and Mary. For more details of the decline of royal troupe under Mary, see chapter 4.

<sup>14</sup> As important royal companies have already been fairly thoroughly scrutinised, I exclude them from the present study. For works on royal players, see White, *Theatre and Reformation*, chapter 2 and Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean, *The Queen's Men and their Plays, 1583-1603* (Cambridge, 1998).

<sup>15</sup> The 83 patrons are those whose companies had performing records during the period of 1530 and 1580. Although many companies have experienced several patrons, those whose period of sponsorship was beyond our period were not included.



master. At least 18 Tudor companies had such an experience. The Essex's company, for instance, had three patrons (Walter Deveruex, Lettice Knollys, while Robert Devereux) and the Worcester's had two (William and Edward Somerset).<sup>16</sup>

An acting company being passed from one patron's hand to another was certainly not unusual. For example, in 1581, Alexander Houghton of Lea, Lancashire, in his will, bequeathed his collection of musical instruments and playing costumes to his brother Thomas. Alexander asserted that if Thomas had no intention to keep the players, then the possessions were to be given to Sir Thomas Hesketh, whom he wished would take his two players, Fulk Gyllome and William Shakeshafte, into his service, or to help them to find another master.<sup>17</sup>

There were certain principles behind the operation. Family connection was the most prevalent one. Very often, when the old patron passed away, his successor, usually the eldest son, continued the patronage of the family troupe. Henry Ratcliffe, earl of Sussex, for instance, inherited the family troupe when he succeeded as the new earl in 1583; and the company of James Blount, Lord Mountjoy, was passed to the patronage of his son and heir William, when the old Lord died in 1581.<sup>18</sup> What is interesting is that although a company was usually passed from the father's hand to

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<sup>16</sup> For a complete list, see appendix 4.

<sup>17</sup> Peter Roberts, 'Elizabethan Players and Minstrels and the Legislation of 1572 against Retainers and Vagabonds', in Religion, Culture, and Society in Early Modern Britain: Essays in Honour of Patrick Collinson, ed. Anthony Fletcher and Peter Roberts (Cambridge, 1994), p.46.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. John Murray, English Dramatic Companies, 1558-1642, 2 vols. (London, 1910), vol.2, p.57.

the son's, it could have operated the other way round. The earl of Shrewsbury's company was a good example; their first patron was Francis Talbot (Lord Talbot between 1580-82) and the patronage later moved to Francis's father, George.<sup>19</sup>

The succession of patronage was not confined to the male figures of the family only; in many cases, sponsorship could pass to the hand of the mistress. This was especially the case when the heir apparent was juvenile or no male heir was in line. For instance, the Suffolk's company was first under the patronage of the duke, Charles Brandon, but when the master died in 1545, it moved to the sponsorship of the duchess, Katherine Willoughby.<sup>20</sup> The Essex's men sometimes performed under their mistress's name, as their old master, Walter Devereux, passed away in 1576 and the new earl was only ten. The story of the Monteagle-Morley's players was another pattern of family patronage. The company was at first sponsored by William Stanley, Lord Monteagle, and then transferred to the hand of Edward Parker, Lord Morley. Parker, who married Lady Elizabeth, the daughter and heiress of Monteagle, was son-in-law of Stanley.<sup>21</sup>

Although very often both father and son kept livery players, the young lord's company was not necessarily the one inherited from the father; in many cases, the company of the father and of the son were in reality two different ones. The

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.66-7, 96.

<sup>20</sup> For more about the troupe, see chapter 4.

patronage of the de Vere family was such a case. When the old earl of Oxford, John, died in 1562, his son Edward was only thirteen, under the wardship of Sir William Cecil, Master of the Court of Wards. Cecil probably had thought maintaining a family troupe was unnecessary for a young lord; he disbanded the Oxford's troupe in around 1564/5. Edward later had his own company and was famous for his love of drama.<sup>22</sup>

Although the patterns of company transfer varied from case to case, family connection was always the principle. Whether it was from the father's hand to the son's, or from the husband's to the wife's, patronage, in our period, never shifted to figures outside the same household. This phenomenon shows that patronage of acting company was very much a family practice: livery players were family servants. The new lord did not disband the 'old' playing company because a master did not dismiss his servants from the household without specific reasons. This convention changed however when English theatre entered the London era. Patronage then began to pass from one hand to another, without family connection. The company of Ferdinando Stanley, the fifth earl of the Derby, for example, was passed to the patronage of Henry Carey, Lord Hunsdon, after Ferdinando died in 1594.<sup>23</sup> The Pembroke's Men,

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<sup>21</sup> Cf. Murray, English Dramatic Companies, vol.2, pp.54-5.

<sup>22</sup> Many contemporary scholars believe that Edward was the genuine author of 'Shakespeare's' works. See, for instance, Dennis E. Baron, De Vere is Shakespeare: evidence from the biography and wordplay (Cambridge, 1997). Cf. Murray, ibid., pp.62-3.

<sup>23</sup> The company was known as Earl of Derby's name for a very short period of time, when Ferdinando succeeded the title on 25 September 1593. Ferdinando died in 1594. The company has shortly appeared as Countess of Derby's troupe in 1595. I called the troupe 'Strange-Chamberlain's

which was supposed to be under the patronage of Henry Herbert, earl of Pembroke, merged with Lord Admiral's company in 1597. Stanley had no family link with Carey, and one can not imagine the 'household servants' of the Herberts 'merging' with those of Charles Howard, the Lord Admiral. The two cases therefore show that livery players of the London period, though still carrying the title of their patron, were no longer household servants; their connection with their patrons was now rather nominal.

The best example illustrating this changing relationship between patron and company was the earl of Leicester's Men. When Robert Dudley, the earl of Leicester, died in 1588, his role as a major patron was inherited by his stepson, Robert Devereux, the earl of Essex. Surprisingly, Dudley's established acting company was not passed to the hand of the stepson altogether. As a young man eager to establish his status as a leading patron, Devereux certainly would have loved to inherit Leicester's troupe. But, instead of seeking Essex's sponsorship, the distinguished company disbanded. Principal players of the troupe transferred to the Strange-Chamberlain's men, whereas the remnant of the company, which recruited some of the Strange's actor, 'sought a new patron unknown.'<sup>24</sup> The reason for Essex's failure

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company', for when Henry Carey, the old Lord Hunsdon (the company was shortly known as 'Lord Hunsdon's players' before the Lord died in 1596), the troupe passed to his son, then lord Hunsdon. But the young Hunsdon, George, later succeeded as Lord Chamberlain in 1597, and the company was therefore known as 'Lord Chamberlain's men'. See Murray, *ibid.*, vol.1, pp.94-5. The company passed to James VI (known as King James's players) after March 1603. Murray, I., p.105. Hunsdon kept his own company before he took over the Lord Strange's men. But what happened to this 'old' company, as Murray argued, was not known. See *ibid.*, p.92.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p.36.

to continue his stepfather's patronage is complicated. It is possibly because Devereux already had his own company and had no intention of keeping two troupes at the same time. This however was not a big impediment. In fact, a patron could either merge the two troupes (which probably applied to the Stanley family),<sup>25</sup> or abandon his old company and keep the new one (as Lord Hunsdon did). The Devereux case was therefore more likely due to the loose connection between Leicester and his men. The players served the lord, but they were scarcely Leicester's household servants;<sup>26</sup> thus they chose either to transfer to other companies, or to seek a new patron, when the earl died.

With these general ideas of the nature of the noble patronage of players, we are now able to analyse further noble playing companies of our period. The range of the touring of noble companies varied extensively. At one end of the spectrum, we have the most active troupe, Leicester's Men, which appears in 24 counties and contains 187 entries; but we also have many 'minor' troupes that appear in only one county and provide only one entry. According to the numbers of the counties they visited, the 148 noble companies of our period can be divided into two groups: those containing records appearing in several counties and those in one. Based on this principle, there are 68 troupes belong to the first category, and 80 to the second.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> See later discussion of this chapter.

<sup>26</sup> Leicester's Men, unlike some London troupes, never cut off their connection with the earl entirely. See chapter 6.

<sup>27</sup> For a complete list of the companies belong to each group and the county number visited by each company, see appendix.

This is an efficient mode of classification, for in analysing the patrons of these two groups of companies, we find that the categorising faithfully reflects the social status of the patron. Generally speaking, patrons of the first group were people of national influence, such as the earls of Leicester, Derby, and Warwick; whereas those of the second group were regional figures; many of them were known merely as 'Masters' Smith, Tock, or Cripe. The companies of the first group therefore can generally be described as greater companies with national association and the second as regional ones.

In chapter 1 we argued that payments very much reflected the social status of the patron. This principle can also be applied to the present category. Surveying the average payment received by each noble company, we find that greater companies under our classification generally received better rewards than the regional ones. The company receiving least reward in the first group is Patrick Gray's company, which had an average payment of 4s 2d between 1538-41;<sup>28</sup> while that in the second group, Mr Sheriff's players, received only 6d in the 1560s.<sup>29</sup> Besides, amongst the top

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<sup>28</sup> Strictly speaking, Gray's company, which contains two entries, is still somewhat of regional based. It performed in two adjoining counties—Kent and Sussex. But taking Gray's players as the example of the lowest-paid first-group companies does not affect much our argument, for if we choose the second-least-paid company instead, it will be the one of Lord Admiral, Thomas Seymour, whose average payment (in the 1540s) is 4s 3d. Discuss only the amount of payment, however, will distort the picture if we do not put into consideration the process of time. But as evaluating the payments received by playing companies is not our present purpose, I did not include this variable into our discussion here. For the average payment received by acting companies in each decade, see chapter 1. See James Gibson (ed.), 'REED, Kent' (forthcoming).

<sup>29</sup> Mr Sheriff's company contains but one entry, and it was at New Romney, Kent, in 1561-2. The contrast between the payments received by the first and second groups, which are represented by the Gray's and the Sheriff's companies, is even bigger if we consider that, because of inflation, payment in the 1560s is supposed to be more generous than that in the 1540s. See *ibid.*.

twenty higher-paid companies, twelve of them belong to the first group, and eight to the second;<sup>30</sup> whereas all the twenty least-paid companies belong to the second group.<sup>31</sup> This analysis shows that greater companies were generally better rewarded than the regional ones. As payments usually reflected the status of the patron, the survey strongly suggests that patrons of greater companies, on the whole, enjoyed higher social status than those of regional troupes. It therefore also confirms our earlier argument that touring range was responding to the status of the patron; in other words, acting troupes whose patrons enjoyed national influence travelled more extensively than those patronised by regional figures.

This survey also supports the argument that connection played an important role in deciding the size of rewards. The three best-rewarded troupes on our payment list are regional companies; they are players of Richard Ingworth, (22*s*), those of Lord Cobham, George Brooke (20*s*), and those of John Dudley (or Sutton) (20*s*). Neither Ingworth, Brooke, nor Dudley enjoyed national influence. The only possible explanation therefore must be that the patron of these companies contained special connection with the locality. As the nature of national and regional companies varied drastically, the two groups of noble companies should be studied separately. We shall focus on the greater companies here, and leave the regional ones to next chapter.

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<sup>30</sup> The last company of the top 20 is earl of Essex's players, received an average payment of 11*s* 6*d* between the 1570s and 1590s.

<sup>31</sup> These companies' average payments range from 6*d* to 2*s* 6*d*.

There are 68 companies, with 83 patrons, belonging to the category of greater noble troupes. However, not all these companies are included in our present discussion, for 11 of them, though containing entries in our period, were mainly of the post-1580 era.<sup>32</sup> Apart from these 11 troupes, there is another acting company that is excluded from the discussion; that is the Hunsdon's players. This company was patronised by Henry Carey (1525/6-96), Lord Hunsdon, who had begun to keep his own household troupe from 1564-5. It was fairly active in the 1560s and 1580s. Carey seems to have been very fond of drama; in 1594, he took over the popular Lord Strange's Men, when its patron, Ferdinando Stanley, died. What is perplexing about the troupe is that nothing is known about the original Lord Hunsdon's players. Hunsdon's men toured the provinces as Lord Chamberlain's Men ever since their master acquired the post in July 1585.<sup>33</sup> When the Strange's Men transferred to Carey's hand in 1594, it adopted the title of its new master. In other words, theoretically, there were two 'official' Chamberlain's companies touring after 1594. This, however, was unlikely the case. On the one hand, there was no reason for a patron to keep two companies, and on the other, records suggest that only one Lord Chamberlain's Men toured the country after 1594. So what happened to the original Carey's players? Was it disbanded? Was it merged with the Strange's? Or did it resume the old title, travelling as Lord Hunsdon's players?<sup>34</sup> As the history of the

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<sup>32</sup> For details of these 11 companies, see appendix 4.

<sup>33</sup> The Lord Hunsdon's company began to be known as Lord Chamberlain's Men when Carey succeeded the position in July 1585. This is the Strange-Chamberlain company mentioned above.

<sup>34</sup> In 1595-6, a company known as Lord Hunsdon's players was rewarded 16s at Faversham, Kent. See 'REED, Kent' (forthcoming).



Hunsdon's company remains obscure, which makes it difficult to investigate it further, the company is excluded from the following discussion.

There are therefore 56 effective greater noble companies of our period. Listing them by the range of their touring, we have the earl of Leicester's Men, visiting 24 counties, at the top. Next to Leicester's players, there are nine companies whose performances were recorded in more than ten counties: they are the second Essex's troupe (21), Worcester's (20), the second Sussex/Chamberlain's (19), the second Derby's and Suffolk's (16),<sup>35</sup> the third Berkeley's, the second Oxford's (15), Warwick's (14), and Mountjoy's (13).<sup>36</sup> Apart from these top ten companies, there are 12 troupes visiting more than five counties; 5 travelled to five counties, 9 visiting four counties, 10 visiting three counties, and 11 travelled to two counties.<sup>37</sup>

This classification of playing companies by the numbers of the counties they visited very much reflects the popularity of the troupes and the status of their patrons. For example, the most widely-toured company, Leicester's Men, is also the one that provides most entries—187 in total. And if we compare the top ten companies on the touring-range list and those on the entry-number list, we find that the results are fairly similar. The ten troupes providing most records are Leicester's players (187), Worcester's (157), second Sussex/Chamberlain's (137), second Essex's (106), third

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<sup>35</sup> The complete name of this company used in the appendix is Suffolk/duchess of Suffolk's players.

<sup>36</sup> This is the third Derby's company, patronised, in our period, by Ferdinando Stanley (c.1559-94).

<sup>37</sup> For a complete list, see appendix 4.

Berkeley's (56), Monteagle-Morley's (50), Mountjoy's (48), second Derby's (47), Suffolk's (45), and first Arundel's (39). In other words eight companies appear on both lists, and the top four troupes are identical.<sup>38</sup>

A similar picture appears when we compare the touring-range list and the reward list. The top ten companies on our reward list are Leicester's (15*s* 2*d*), Cromwell/Bale's (13*s* 8*d*), second Sussex/Chamberlain's (13*s* 1*d*), FitzJames's (11*s* 8*d*), second Essex's (11*s* 6*d*), Compton's (11*s* 2*d*), second Derby's (11*s*), Worcester's and Warwick's (10*s* 11*d*), and Shrewsbury's (10*s* 2*d*).<sup>39</sup> Leicester's players again occupy the head of the reward list, and six companies of the two lists are overlapping. In chapter 1 I argued that payments to players very much reflected the status of their patrons. As payments reflected the status of the patron, the comparison suggests that those playing companies whose patron enjoyed higher social status, travelled more frequently and widely. In other words, according to our lists, Leicester's, Essex's, Worcester's, Sussex's, and Derby's companies were the five most important playing troupes of our period.

In earlier discussion we have demonstrated that it was the troupes whose

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<sup>38</sup> For a complete list of the travelling range and entry number of all noble companies, see appendix.

<sup>39</sup> This is the average payment they received per performance. This list of course is not without defect; because of inflation, players were generally better rewarded as time went by. This disadvantage however did not affect our analysis much, for only Cromwell/Bale's company was of the first half of the century; most other players were generally assessed based on the similar standard. To avoid the possible distortion, I also provide average payment received by each company in different decade in the appendix.

master enjoyed national fame which travelled most extensively. That is, if a patron was a national figure, his company would tour widely, and if he was only a regional figure, his players would performed in specific areas only. This conclusion suggests that the touring range of a company had much connection with the patron's influence. But what was the link between the two? Can the touring of acting companies reflect the sphere of influence of their patron? In the following section, the Derby's company, one of the most important greater noble troupes, will be examined. We shall attempt to ascertain the actual connection between the household troupe and the family's sphere of influence.<sup>40</sup>

#### **iv. The Stanleys, Earls of Derby, and Their Patronage of Players**

The Stanleys, earls of Derby, was an ancient family based in the north-west. They had three residences in Lancashire, Knowsley, Lathom House, and New Park, which were major venues in the county for travelling players. Due to the fact that Lancashire records do not exist in any quantity until the second half of the sixteenth century, little evidence of travelling players visiting the county are available for much of the Tudor period.<sup>41</sup> The Stanleys' fondness of drama is evident nevertheless. Thomas Heywood asserted that 'the Chester actors and singers, so renowned for their

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<sup>40</sup> For more about Leicester's Men, see chapter 5.

<sup>41</sup> See David George (ed.), REED, Lancashire (Toronto, 1991), liii. Unfortunately, there is no records of players between 1530 and 1580 in Lancashire.

miracle plays, had constant communication' with Lathom and Knowsley.<sup>42</sup> And in 1577, the fourth earl Henry 'did lye 2 nightes at his [the Mayor of Chester's] house; the Shepheardes play, was played at the highe crosse, with other triumphes.'<sup>43</sup> And among the twenty-five entries for travelling players in Lancashire, four were payments to players at Knowsley, two at Lathom, and one at New Park. Famous troupes, such as the Leicester's, the Queen's, and Essex's players were amongst those which performed in the Derby household.<sup>44</sup> The family also had a long tradition of keeping household acting troupes. The Priory of Thetford records from 1461 to 1540 show that the players of the earl and countess of Derby visited the monks during the period.<sup>45</sup>

The Stanleys certainly had a family tradition of patronising theatrical activity; the house, from the third earl onward, continued to sponsor dramatists and players. To investigate further their relationship with acting companies, however, we shall first acquire some knowledge of individual master's attitudes towards literary patronage. Edward, the third earl, is the first member of the family to appear in our

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<sup>42</sup> Thomas Heywood, The Stanley Papers, part I: The Earls of Derby and the Verse Writers and Poets of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centures, Chetham Society 29 (1853) p.11. (Hereafter Stanley Papers, I).

<sup>43</sup> The Shepherd's plays were selected by the Mayor to 'do honour to an accidental visit' of the earl. See ibid., pp.24-5.

<sup>44</sup> See REED, Lancashire, pp.180-2. Cf. F.E. Raines, (ed.), 'The Derby Household Books', The Stanley Papers, part II, Chetham Society, 31 (Chetahm Society, 1853), pp.32, 51, 56-7, 62, 65, 75, 82. (Hereafter Stanley Papers, II.)

<sup>45</sup> J.P. Collier's The history of English dramatic poetry to the time of Shakespeare : and annals of the stage to the restoration, new edition (London: G. Bell, 1879), vol.1, pp.84-5. Cf. Stanley Papers, I, p.11.

list of noble patrons. He does not appear to have been a great patron of drama and literature. There are only a few evidences showing the earl's connection with writers. An epitaph upon Countess Margaret written by Richard Sheale, for instance, reveals the writer's connection with the family.<sup>46</sup> Edward's patronage of players is more evident. There are ten records of his company, falling into the period between 1531 and 1569. According to 'the Bursar's Expenses Book' of the Durham Priory, the company contained four players,<sup>47</sup> and the players apparently travelled widely: they had performed in at least 9 counties during Edward's time.

The next master was Henry Stanley, who continued to style himself Lord Strange until 1572, when succeeding his father as the fourth earl of Derby.<sup>48</sup> According to Thomas Heywood, Henry was in frequent communication with actors, poets and heralds. Thomas Chaloner of Chester, for example, once addressed a verse to the earl.<sup>49</sup> Thomas Newton lauded him in his 'Encomia et Eulogia' annexed to 'Leland's Encomia' in 1589.<sup>50</sup> Henry's wife, Countess Margaret, was also fond of

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<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.14-6.

<sup>47</sup> '...Et capellano per bursarium pro iijor lusoribus domini comitis de darby in auro, 7s 6d.' See T. Craik and J. McKinnell (eds.), 'REED, Durham' (forthcoming). Thomas Heywood believed that Edward's company was mainly recruited from Chester. As there is no further proof that we can find, I leave it here as speculation. See *Stanley Papers*, I, p.11.

<sup>48</sup> Henry was summoned to the Parliament as Lord Strange of Knokyn in 1558/9.

<sup>49</sup> The title was called 'A Coppie of the demonstrationes of Parker's worke to the right honorable my god L. Therle of Derbye Julie 23'. Chaloner was a herald painter and genealogist. He was in c.1576 commissioned to paint a screen designed by Parker, an old servant at Lathom. Chaloner's laudatory and explanatory lines were written on the outer part of the fold. See *Stanley Papers*, I, pp.20-1.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p.26.

literature: she patronised two remarkable authors of the time, Thomas Lupton and Robert Greene; and the latter dedicated his The Myrrour of Modestie to her in 1584.<sup>51</sup> Henry was also an important patron of players. He began to retain his own acting troupe in 1573-4, when he was still Lord Strange. His players were very active: they performed in at least twenty five locations, covering sixteen counties. Only three noble companies, Leicester's (24 counties), Essex's (21), and Worcester's (17), travelled more extensively than Henry's.<sup>52</sup> The success of the company was recognised by the court; it was summoned three times to perform there between 1580 and 1582.<sup>53</sup>

Ferdinando, the next earl, though died only a few months after his father, Henry, was nonetheless important in the history of noble patronage. Ferdinando was fond of literature. He himself was a writer of verses and through his wife, countess Alice, became patron and friend of many celebrated authors of the time, including Robert Greene, Edmund Spenser, Thomas Nashe, John Harrington, Henry Lok, John Davies, and John Marston. Greene dedicated his Ciceronis Amor (1589) to the lord; Nashe in his The Supplication of Piers Penniless (1592) has a compliment on him;

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., pp.27-8.

<sup>52</sup> Henry's company has visited Berkshire (Abingdon), Cambridgeshire (Cambridge), Devon (Dartmouth, Exeter, Plymouth), Essex (Chelmsford, Maldon), Gloucestershire (Bristol, Gloucester), Hampshire (Southampton), Kent (Canterbury, Dover, Faversham, Lydd, New Romney), Lancashire (Liverpool), Leicestershire (Leicester), Northumberland (Newcastle-upon-Tyne), Nottinghamshire (Nottingham), Norfolk (Norwich), Somerset (Bath), Suffolk (Ipswich), Warwickshire (Coventry, Stratford-upon-Avon), and Yorkshire (Beverley). See appendix 6.

<sup>53</sup> According to John Murray, Henry's company performed at court on 14 February (1580), New Years Day (1581), and 30 December (1582). John Murray, I, p.293. See also Chambers, ES, vol.2, p.118.

and George Chapman, in his dedication of the Shadow of the Night (1594) spoke of 'that most ingenious Darbie.'<sup>54</sup> Ferdinando's players also travelled widely; they visited fifteen counties and twenty-two locations.<sup>55</sup> From 1591 onwards, the company was invited regularly to act at court and performed almost annually for the Christmas celebrations well into the late Tudor period.<sup>56</sup>

Amongst the three earls, Ferdinando's patronage was the most important, but also the most complicated one. He began to retain his own troupe in 1576 under his conventional family title, Lord Strange. His company appears almost continuously in our records from 1576 until the lord's death in 1594.<sup>57</sup> The history of Ferdinando's company was complicated, because when the earl of Leicester died in 1588, Ferdinando took over the famous Leicester's Men. Ferdinando died in 1594 and his widow, Alice, continued the patronage of the acting troupe. But the Stanley's patronage did not last long; the troupe soon passed to the hand of a new master, Henry Carey, Lord Hunsdon, and later his son George. The complication of

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<sup>54</sup> Stanley Papers, I, pp.30-5. Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee (eds.), Dictionary of National Biography, 63 with supplementary volumes (London, 1885- ), vol.18, p.954.

<sup>55</sup> The places visited by Ferdinando's company are Cambridgeshire (Cambridge), Devon (Barnstaple, Exeter, Plymouth), Kent (Canterbury, Faversham, Folkstone, Lydd, Maidstone), Gloucestershire (Bristol, Gloucester), Hampshire (Southampton), Leicestershire (Leicester), Norfolk (Norwich), Nottinghamshire (Nottingham), Oxfordshire (Oxford), Shropshire (Shrewsbury), Somerset (Bath), Suffolk (Ipswich), Sussex (Rye), Warwickshire (Coventry), Yorkshire (Beverley). For more details, see appendix 6.

<sup>56</sup> The company, when under the patronage of Ferdinando, appeared at court on 27 and 28 December 1591, 1, 9 January, 6, 8 February, 26 and 31 December 1592, and 1 January 1593. See Murray, English Dramatic Companies.

<sup>57</sup> The only short interval is 1586 and 1589-90.

Ferdinando's patronage lies in that when Ferdinando took over the Leicester's Men, he already had his own acting company. How the two troupes under the same patron interacted with each other remains obscure. The 'original' Lord Strange's players (Leicester's Men was called Lord Strange's players after the take-over) could have disbanded or merged with Leicester's players. Ferdinando's troupe disappeared from the stage between 1589 and 1590, which could be attributed to the reorganisation of the Lord Strange's company. But as no more details of the pre-1588 Lord Strange's players are known, the composition of the post-1588 company, unfortunately, is doomed to remain unknown.

Ferdinando died unexpectedly in 1594 without a male heir and the earldom passed to his younger brother, William. William loved drama. He wrote comedies and devoted himself to horse-racing and music after 1617.<sup>58</sup> George Fanner, in his letters to Hum. Galdelli and Guiseppe Tusinga, on 30 June 1599 related that the earl of Derby was then 'busy penning comedies for the common players.'<sup>59</sup> As William was not the successor expected,<sup>60</sup> he was never styled Lord Strange during his brother's lifetime. William became the patron of the Derby's players in 1595. There

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<sup>58</sup> REED, *Lancashire*, xxxvii. See also *Stanley Papers*, I, pp.47-53.

<sup>59</sup> *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reign of Elizabeth, 1598-1601* (London, 1869), p.227. Cf. Chambers, *ES*, vol.2, p.127. Some scholars, such as James Greenstreet, even argued that William Stanley was the real William Shakespeare, an idea with which Chambers very much disagrees. See *ibid.*, n.1.

<sup>60</sup> Should Ferdinando have left a son behind him, then William would not have succeeded to the earldom.



are thirty entries for his company,<sup>61</sup> coming from twelve counties.<sup>62</sup> The players were invited to perform at Court during the winters of 1599-1600 and 1600-1 and four performances were given on 3 and 5 February 1600 and 1 and 6 January 1601, when one Robert Browne was the payee.<sup>63</sup> William's company continued to tour the provinces well into the Stuart period.<sup>64</sup>

With some understanding of the masters of the Stanley house, we are now able to continue our investigation on the Stanley's players. As Chambers pointed out, the history of the Stanley companies was probably more complicated than any others, because it appears to be a family custom for the heir of the house to retain his own playing troupe during his father's life-time.<sup>65</sup> The Stanley family acquired the title of Lord Strange through the marriage of George Stanley (d.1503) with Joan, daughter and heiress of John, Lord Strange of Knockin. From George onward, it was a tradition of the family for the heir apparent to style himself Lord Strange. As both the master and the heir kept acting companies, it is therefore possible to see two Stanley's troupes roaming on the road at the same time. No document records

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<sup>61</sup> This is the number of the company's entries up to the end of the Tudor period.

<sup>62</sup> The places visited by William's company are Essex (Chelmsford, Maldon), Gloucestershire (Bristol, Gloucester), Herefordshire (Leominster), Kent (Canterbury, Faversham), Leicestershire (Leicester), Norfolk (Norwich), Oxfordshire (Oxford), Somerset (Bath), Suffolk (Ipswich), Warwickshire (Coventry), Westmorland (Kendal), and Yorkshire (Londesborough, York). See appendix 6.

<sup>63</sup> Chambers, *ES*, vol.2, p.127.

<sup>64</sup> See *ibid.*, p.127.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p.118.

whether 'Lord Strange' would take over his father's company when he became the new earl of Derby, or whether his 'Lord Strange's company' would be 'promoted' to be 'the earl of Derby's' after his patron's succession to the earldom. An investigation of the travels of the two Stanley's companies, however, may help us find the answer.

The acting troupe(s) patronised by Henry Stanley provide a good sample for our analysis; by scrutinising the touring customs of Henry's players under the titles of Lord Strange's troupe and of the earl of Derby's, we shall find out whether the two troupes were virtually identical.<sup>66</sup> For convenience, Henry's troupe of the pre-1572 period will be called Lord Strange's players, whereas the one of the post-1572 era, the Derby's. Among the 47 entries for Henry's players, 15 belong to the Lord Strange's period and 32 to the Derby's. Comparing the places visited by the two companies, we find that only five locations overlap: they are Bristol, Dover, Gloucester, Ipswich, and Southampton, and these locations contribute just twelve entries. In other words, only five out of the entire twenty-five locations visited by the players contain performing records for both Henry's companies, and entries of these locations contribute only 25.5% of the entire records. The result does not become much more impressive if the comparison is extended from locations to counties. The five overlapping counties yield 23 entries, about 49% of the entire records (49 entries). The survey therefore suggests that the Lord Strange's company and the

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<sup>66</sup> Ferdinando's company is not a good sample for our analysis, for although his company (or companies) has also experienced two stages (known as Lord Strange's men and later earl of Derby's), the second stage was so short (only a few months) that a serious distortion of the picture is unavoidable.

Derby's were very possibly two independent ones, as they did not share a similar touring pattern. In other words, it is unlikely that Lord Strange's players would advance to be the earl of Derby's when their master succeeded to the earldom. Then, was the Lord Strange's men passed to the hand of the new heir after the current patron became the earl? An investigation of the touring pattern of Lord Strange's players of both Henry's and Ferdinando's periods may provide us with the answer.

Henry was styled Lord Strange from 1559 to 1572,<sup>67</sup> and Ferdinando from 1572 to 1593. There are 47 entries of Lord Strange's players during the period: 15 of them belong to Henry's troupe and 32 to Ferdinando's. A comparison between the locations visited by the Lord Strange's players under the two lords shows that the two companies visited 7 identical locations (out of 24 visited) and 5 counties (out of 14).<sup>68</sup> These 7 identical locations yield 21 entries in total, about 44.7% of the entire records (47 entries). The result becomes even more impressive if the survey is extended to the identical counties: the five counties provide 30 entries in total, which were about 63.8% of the entire records (47 entries). The 44.7% and 63.8% are much higher than the 25.5% and 49% mentioned above. In other words, the touring pattern of Henry's Lord Strange's company was more similar to that of Ferdinando's Lord Strange's than to Henry's Derby's; it is therefore reasonable to conclude that Henry's

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<sup>67</sup> As the heir apparent of the Stanley family, Henry was styled as Lord Strange before 1559, but it was the Parliamentary summon of 1558/9 that has formally confirmed his status as Lord Strange. See G[eorge] E[dward] C[okayne], *The Complete Peerage*, vol.12(1), p.357.

<sup>68</sup> The locations visited by players of both periods are Cambridge (Cambridgeshire), Plymouth (Devon), Bristol, Gloucester (Gloucestershire), Canterbury, Lydd (Kent), Ipswich (Suffolk).

Lord Strange's troupe was not promoted to become the earl of Derby's company, but left to the patronage of his heir, the new Lord Strange, Ferdinando.

The analysis of Henry's and Ferdinando's patronage shows that the earl of Derby's company and Lord Strange's were virtually two independent companies. When the current Lord Strange, the heir apparent of the family, succeeded the earldom, he usually took up the Derby's troupe patronised by the last earl and left the Lord Strange's company to the new heir apparent. This conclusion however does not answer all our questions of the two family troupes; the interaction between the two Stanley companies remains obscure. To clear up the puzzle, a further investigation of the tourings of the two acting troupes of our period is given.

If dividing the patronage of Stanley's players in our period into two main periods—Edward's (1531-72) and Henry's (1573-93), we find that the two phases present very different pictures of the interaction between the Derby's company and the Strange's. In Edward's time, the two companies seldom toured the provinces at the same time. The Derby's players were active between 1531 and 1540, after which year they were only seen at Newcastle in 1566 and at New Romney in 1568-9.<sup>69</sup> By contrast, the Lord Strange's company, under the patronage of Edward's son, Henry, did not begin to tour the country until the 1560s and continued their performance until the end of the first phase. In summary, in Edward's time, the two companies

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<sup>69</sup> See J.J. Anderson (ed.), REED, Newcastle-upon-Tyne (Toronto, 1982), p.45 and 'REED, Kent' (forthcoming).

seldom performed before the public together; it is even fair to conclude that by 1540, the Derby's troupe was the chief (if not the only) Stanley's company on the road, while from the 1560s, it was the Strange's which played the major role.<sup>70</sup>

The interaction between the two companies was very different in the second phase. Our records show that both Henry's and Ferdinando's companies were very active by the middle of the 1580s: amongst the 48 records of the Stanley's players between 1573 and 1585, 31 belong to Henry's company and 17 to Ferdinando's. What is very different from the former era is that the two companies, though obviously not traveling together, often visited the same location in the same year. For instance, they were both at Ipswich in 1576-7, at Faversham in 1577-8, at Bath in 1578-8 and 1580-1, and at Nottingham in 1581-2.<sup>71</sup> This 'companionship' between the two companies had terminated by the mid-1580s. Henry's troupe disappears from our records almost entirely after 1583;<sup>72</sup> Ferdinando's company hence became the only active Stanley troupe from 1583 to 1594.

Two conclusions can therefore be drawn from the comparison above. First, the

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<sup>70</sup> There is no records of either Derby's or Strange's companies in our data between 1541-62. When Edward's company visited Newcastle in 1566, Henry's was at Beverley. And when the earl's troupe appears again in our records in 1568-9 at New Romney, Lord Strange's company performed at Canterbury and Dover. It seems that the two companies chose similar areas to tour, however, they never performed in the same place at the same time.

<sup>71</sup> The two troupes both visited Warwickshire (one at Coventry, and the other at Stratford-upon-Avon) in 1578-9.

<sup>72</sup> After 1583, the only entry we have of Henry's players was in 1591-2 at Ipswich.

Derby's and the Strange's were two independent troupes. The companies were usually passed from the father's hand to the son's and the troupes were in general more attached to the Stanley household than to their individual masters. Second, the two companies had no fixed pattern of interaction; they could either take similar routes or go their separate ways. There is one more finding that could be supplemented to our conclusions, however; that is, although the Stanleys, in appearance, kept two companies, only within a very short period did the two troupes appeared at the same time: amongst the almost incessant 73 years of Stanley's patronage of players (in the Tudor period),<sup>73</sup> only seven of them contain performing records of two Stanley companies. In other words, in the remaining 66 years, only one Stanley's troupe was on the road.

Both the Derby's troupe and the Strange's were patronised by the Stanley family. However, as mentioned earlier, the history of the Strange's players became quite complicated after Ferdinando took over the Leicester's Men. Leicester's company, which was amongst the pioneering few acting troupes settled in London, was in essence a commercial company. This character did not alter after it passed to the patronage of Ferdinando. In other words, the Lord Strange's company, which used to be a family troupe, transformed itself into a commercial one after 'merging' with the Leicester's Men. As the nature of the Strange's Men changed over time and as the touring of a commercial company hardly reflected the interest of their patron

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<sup>73</sup> From 1531 to 1603.

(mainly nominal), in the following discussion we will focus on the earl of Derby's company only when trying to figure out the possible link between the touring pattern of the players and the sphere of influence of the patron.<sup>74</sup>

The earl of Derby's company, which first appeared on the road in 1531-2, toured fairly extensively; their footsteps covered all the major circuits, the East Anglian, the Kentish, the western, the northern, and the north-western tours.<sup>75</sup> The company took the East Anglian circuit as early as 1531-2 when Edward was the earl; it performed at Dunmow in 1531-2 and Cambridge in 1532-3. It visited Cambridge again in 1535-6, but then withdrew from the area entire until 1576-7. When the troupe returned to the area in the mid-1570s, it was Henry, the fourth earl, who was the head of the household. The players performed at Ipswich in 1576-7, at Ipswich and Norwich in 1581-2, and at Ipswich in 1591-2. The company also had a short appearance in the area when Ferdinando was the earl: they first visited Ipswich (around 8 May), then Norwich (around 15 September) in 1593-4. The only more complete tour in the circuit however was taken in William's time: in 1596-7, the troupe performed at Ipswich, Maldon and Chelmsford accordingly. It returned to Ipswich (4 June) and Norwich (10 June) in 1601-2.

The next circuit taken by the Derby's players was the Kentish one. They first

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<sup>74</sup> For more discussion of the Leicester's Men and the commercial character of those London-based companies, see chapters 5 and 6.

<sup>75</sup> For a complete list of the earl of Derby's company's touring, see appendix 6.

appeared in the area in 1568-9, performing at New Romney. It was also the only entry for the company in the area in Edward's time. The company returned to the region in the late 1570s, when Henry was the earl. It visited Faversham and Dover in 1577-8 and Faversham again in 1579-80. The troupe did not show up in Ferdinando's time, but performed at Canterbury in 1595-6 and Faversham in 1601-2, when patronised by William.

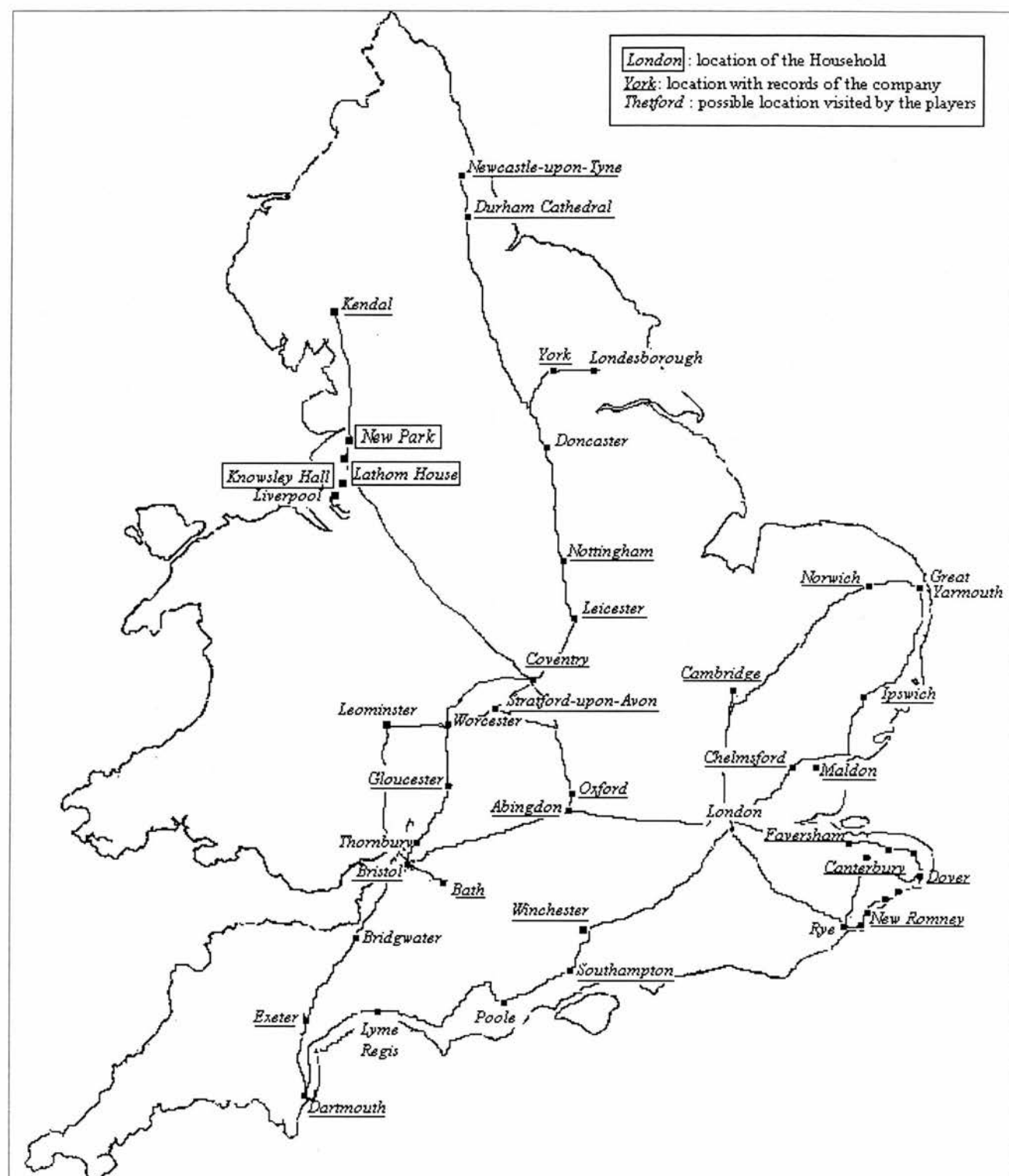
Compared to their adventure in last two regions, the Derby's players certainly spent more time in western counties. They appeared at Bristol as early as 1532-3, performed at Wulfhall (the household of Edward Seymour, later Lord Protector) in 1540, and visited Coventry in 1573-4. The Derby's troupe seem to have taken a 'grand tour' to the western counties between 1578 and 1581:<sup>76</sup> departing from its household in Lancashire, the company went south-east to Coventry. From Coventry, they proceeded further south to another Warwickshire town, Stratford-upon-Avon, and then continued their journey southward.<sup>77</sup> It probably stopped by Worcester, before arriving at Gloucester. From Gloucester, it headed further south to Bristol, Bath, then crossed the county border, entering Devon. It could have performed at Bridgwater before arriving Exeter in April 1580. It then turned south-east to Dartmouth, before embarking for its return journey. From Dartmouth, it followed the coastline, probably stopping by towns, such as Lyme Regis and Poole, before

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<sup>76</sup> The years cannot be very exact, because most entries provide the approximate years of the record only. And inevitably, the touring is to a certain degree conjectural.

<sup>77</sup> There was no major road connecting Coventry and Stratford. The company probably needed to take minor path to access Stratford.





**Map 2: The Touring of the Earl of Derby's Players**

arriving in Southampton. The next town they visited was Abingdon. As there was no direct road connecting Southampton and Abingdon, the company probably needed to go first to London (which would not be a bad choice), then from London it turned westward to Abingdon in Berkshire. From there, the company headed north, possibly performing at Oxford, before proceeding further north to Stratford. And after Stratford, they went to Coventry, from where they followed the route they had taken back to Lancashire.

The company was seen in various western towns between 1581 and 1594; as no complete tour can be reconstructed, it is likely that they took part of the circuit only.<sup>78</sup> Another major tour was taken in around 1596. Departing from Lancashire, again, it first visited Coventry. From Coventry, it continued its journey southward, possibly stopping by Worcester, performing at Gloucester, then arrived at Bristol and Bath, which was the remotest point of their journey. It then turned north-eastward, probably acting at Abingdon before arriving in Oxford. And from Oxford, it took the route northward, leading to Coventry, and from Coventry returned to the Stanley household. In the following year, the company took a slightly different tour. It again first visited Coventry, then possibly went to Worcester, but this time, instead of travelling further south to Gloucester, it continued its journey westward to Leominster. It is likely that the troupe took the route connecting Leominster and Bristol to reach the latter. It was later seen at the adjacent town, Bath. No further

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<sup>78</sup> It was at Exeter in 1580-1, at Bath in 1580-1 and 1582-3, at Southampton in 1582-3, 1593-4, at Coventry in 1593-4, and at Winchester in 1594.

record of the journey is available to suggest which return route it took: the troupe could have chosen the road eastward, passing Oxford, or the one northward, leading to Gloucester and Worcester. The company, nevertheless, should have first proceeded to Coventry and from there followed the route back to Lancashire. After this trip, the Derby's players did not take another grand tour until the end of the Tudor age; they only performed at Coventry twice in the early 1600s.

The north-eastern country was another major area in the touring of the Derby's players. In as early as 1531-2, Edward's troupe has performed at Selby Abbey (Yorkshire) and in 1532-3, Durham Priory rewarded four players of the earl of Derby.<sup>79</sup> The Derby's men later performed at Leicester in 1537-8, and at Newcastle-upon-Tyne in 1566-7. The company visited Newcastle again in 1576, when Henry was the head of the household. However, it was Leicester and Nottingham that were most popular for Henry's troupe: it was at Leicester in 1579-80, 1580-1, and 1582-3, and at Nottingham in 1577-8, 1579-80, 1580-1, and 1581-2. As there was no direct road connecting the two towns and the Stanley household was in Lancashire, the Derby's players probably, as usual, first went to Coventry, then from Coventry turned north to Leicester and Nottingham. The Derby's players returned to Leicester in 1593-4, after Ferdinando succeeded the earldom. They later toured the northern circuit with frequency in William's time; they visited York in 1596, Leicester in 1596-7, 1597-8, 1598-9, and 1599-1600, and Londesborough (the household of the

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<sup>79</sup> See Glynne Wickham, Early English Stages, 1300 to 1600, pp.336, 337 and 'REED, Durham' (forthcoming).

Clifford family) in 1598 and 1599. As a company based in the north-west, it also performed at various towns in the region from time to time; but as records in the area are usually not extant before the late sixteenth century, not many entries of their visits are available. It was at Liverpool in 1582-3 and at Kendal in 1597-8.

In appearance, the Derby's company was not much different from other greater livery companies: their footsteps can be seen on all important circuits of the time. As a company based in the north-west, the focus of the troupe's touring, however, was very different from those London-based ones. Unlike most acting companies, the Derby's players spent little time on the Kentish tour, the most popular circuit of the time: they did not visit the area until the late 1560s, and left only 6 performing entries in Kent. By contrast, the company was very fond of the western counties, which yield 23 entries in total; it took at least two grand tours in the area and even bothered to travel as far as to Dartmouth. The uniqueness of Derby's players also lies in their fondness for the northern towns. Although it was not unusual for an acting company to take a northern tour occasionally, it was certainly extraordinary for a troupe to visit the area frequently. The Derby's company was such a troupe. They travelled to the region from the beginning of the earl's patronage and did not withdraw from it until the end of the sixteenth century; they left at least 23 records in the area. Apart from these, the Derby's company was also one of the very few that had ever performed in the north-west; it was once at Kendal in Westmorland and at Liverpool in Lancashire.

The discussion above shows that although the earl of Derby's company, like most great companies of the time, toured all major circuits, it was much more attached to the northern and the western counties, which were in affinity to its patron's household in Lancashire. Generally speaking, the west and especially the north were less prosperous than the south-east. That the company chose to perform in these areas shows that profit was not their most important concern; regional affinity was more likely to be the major consideration. The Stanley family was based in the north-west; the touring of the Derby's players therefore reveals that the patron's sphere of influence did influence the travelling pattern of the livery company.

It is more difficult to tell, by analysing the touring only, whether the Derby's players were asked by their master to visit the regions for specific purpose; the patronage tradition of the family, however, suggests that the sponsorship of players was part of the practice that had for long been adopted by the family to consolidate their influence in the area. To demonstrate fully the issue, we shall undertake a survey of the family's patronage in general. The allocation of Stanley patronage can be divided between the household servants, tenants, neighbouring landed gentlemen and townspeople. The Stanley household was the 'training school' of the sons of the Lancashire and Cheshire gentry. James, the seventh earl, wrote in the 1640s that his grant-grandfather, earl Edward, had 'bredd up many Youths of Noblemen, Knights and Esquires Sonns (such reputation had he of good Government in his House!) And

the same obliged many Families unto it.'<sup>80</sup> And in 1587, at least seven gentlemen waiters and nineteen yeomen officers from the gentry families of Lancashire and Cheshire, including the most important ones, such as the Warrens of Poynton, the Leighs of Lyme, and the Bolds of Bold, served in the household of Henry, the fourth earl.<sup>81</sup>

In addition to educating the sons of the regional gentry in their household, the Stanleys also secured the affections and loyalty of the members of the ruling elite of Lancashire and Cheshire by the distribution of favour. As great landowners, the earls of Derby had a fund of patronage, in the form of stewardships, receiverships, and lesser offices connected with estate administration to dispense among their dependants. Many leading families of the region, such as the Bolds, the Holcrofts, and the Radcliffes were brought into the patronage network of the Stanelys.<sup>82</sup>

Apart from granting offices, the Stanleys also rewarded their attendants generously. Take their household officers as examples. In addition to their money wages, which represented a negligible fraction of the total income,<sup>83</sup> each gentleman

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<sup>80</sup> Coward, The Stanleys, Lords Stanley and Earls of Derby, 1395-1672 (Manchester, 1983), p.85.

<sup>81</sup> The seven gentlemen waiters were Marmaduke Newton, Edward Warren, James Leigh, Nicolas Thorneborow, Henry Bolde, John Downes, Francis Starkie. See Stanley Papers, II, pp.23-4. Cf. Coward, ibid., p.85.

<sup>82</sup> Coward, ibid., pp.117-8. Coward has made a fairly complete list of the leading families in Lancashire and Cheshire under the Tudors. See pp.112-3.

<sup>83</sup> In 1561, for example, the annual salary of the third earl's receiver was only £13 6s 8d. See Stanley Papers, II, p.5.

waiting in the earl's service 'had Allowance from him [the third earl] to have as well wages as otherwise for Horse and Man'. And in 1587, the steward, controller and receiver-general of the fourth earl's household had their own apartments and kept three servants each on the expenses of their master.<sup>84</sup> In fact, Barry Coward has shown that the Stanleys often rewarded their servants and attendants with land, money, lucrative advowsons and offices in return for their 'faithful service'.<sup>85</sup>

The Stanleys also wielded their influence to favour their dependants. The third earl, Edward, for example, in 1533 wrote a letter to the prior of Lytham, Radulphus Blaxton, insisting that the prior and his council should find in favour of Christopher Fowler, a 'friend' of the earl, who was seeking a pension from the prior.<sup>86</sup> Edward also wrote in the same year to Cromwell asking his help for the earl's friends, neighbours, and servants, who were then in London.<sup>87</sup> The third earl once even secured a wealthy wife to his soldier, John Kighley. The earl insinuated to the unfortunate widow of Thomas Norris that the tenement of her late husband was now in his 'disposcon to order and dispose at my Pleas'. If she would accept the new husband chosen by the earl, then she and Kighley together 'shalhaue and hold the

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<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p.23.

<sup>85</sup> Coward has made a table showing the grants of lands and advowsons made by the third earl of Derby. See his *The Stanleys*, p.88. Coward has made a fairly thorough analysis on the profits made in the service of the Stanleys. See pp.88-92.

<sup>86</sup> Folwer was the rector of Appleby in Leicestershire. *Derby Correspondence*, pp.110-1. Cf. Coward, *ibid.*, p.118.

<sup>87</sup> *Derby Correspondence*, p.121.

tenement' late in the tenure of the late Thomas Norris.<sup>88</sup>

The reason for the Stanleys dispensing such a wide range of patronage was its importance in maintaining the family's influence in the region. On the one hand, it was an important way to demonstrate the influence of the family, apart from the mutual political and economic dependency. On the other, patronage, such as that of players, helped to extend the family's influence outside the household. Maintaining a large household, which means the master was capable of providing more offices, was a way to manifest power. The Stanleys retained a large household. F.R. Raines reports that 'like the Queen, the Earl of Derby had his Comptroller and Steward of the Household, his Grooms of the Bedchamber, and Clerks of the Kitchen,' and as mentioned above, 'the eldest sons of independent gentlemen of the first rank in the county deemed it an honourable distinction to wait in private upon his Lordship at his table, and in public to wear the badge of his livery.'<sup>89</sup> According to the checkroll of the Derby household, there were 118 servants in 1587, and 145 in 1590.<sup>90</sup>

Public acknowledgement of obedience from the retainers was another way to express the political power of large landlords. In return for their protection and

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<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.106-7. Cf. Coward, *The Stanleys*, p.118.

<sup>89</sup> *Stanley Papers*, II, v.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.23-7, 84-8. Cf. Robert Halley, *Lancashire: Its Puritanism and Nonconformity* (Manchester, 1869), p.26. The size of the Stanley's household was typical compared with other noble households. For instance, the earl of Rutland's had 91 in 1536, 135 in 1539, 88 in 1550 and 194 in 1612. Coward, p.92. Cf. Kate Mertes, *The English Noble Household, 1250-1600: Good Governance and Politic Rule* (Oxford, 1988), especially appendix.



patronage, the earls of Derby demanded that their servants exhibited in public their dependence. For instance, the third earl's procession on his way to the coronation of Queen Mary at Westminster on 8 August 1553 was accompanied by 'iiij<sup>xx</sup> in cottes of velvet and order ij C. xviii yomen in a leveray.'<sup>91</sup> And when William Stanley, the sixth earl, returned home from London in July 1597, he had a hearty welcome. Sir Edward Fitton well described the reception in his letter to Sir Robert Cecil:

'1597, July 29-31.—We are arrived here the 28th of this July all in health...My cousin Booth and some few others of my kinsmen and friends met my Lord at the confines of Cheshire and Shropshire, near the Nantwich, and there lodged all night, with near 500 horse. Mr. Booth, being sheriff, and this company, with others, did attend his Lordship to Chester and thence to Sir John Savage's: and as until Sir Richard Molynux and a great number of Lancashire, to the number of 700 horse, met my Lord near Warrington, at which town Mr. Ireland made him a banquet in the street, and so Sir Richard Molynux and divers others attended his Lordship to Knowsley, but went home that night.'<sup>92</sup>

These public displays of the family attendants were significant, because they expressed the potential of the Stanleys' influence; they implied that the lord could draw substantial military support in times of necessity.<sup>93</sup> The Stanley's patronage policy shows that the family purposely employed the practice to consolidate its regional influence. It is therefore reasonable to assume that the sponsorship of players was part of the scheme; the presence of the players, who represented the family by wearing its livery, was an effective means of reminding the public the existence of the Stanley authority. This interpretation, therefore, also explains why

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<sup>91</sup> J.G. Nichols (ed.), The Diary of Henry Machyn, citizen and merchant-taylor of London, from A.D. 1550 to A.D. 1563, Camden Society, 42 (London, 1848), p.40. Cf. Coward, The Stanleys, p.92.

<sup>92</sup> Historical Manuscripts Commission, Salisbury, part 7 (1899), p.327. Sir George Booth of Dunham Massey, was the sheriff of Cheshire. Sir Richard Molyneux was from Sefton. Cf. Coward, ibid., p.96.

<sup>93</sup> Coward, ibid., p.92. Another occasion to see the exhibitions of the Stanley influence was the funeral of the third earl in 1572. At least eighty of the late earl's gentlemen and fifty knights and esquires joined the funeral cortege. See p.120.

the touring pattern of the earl of Derby's players, as shown in earlier discussion, was closely linked to the sphere of influence of the family.

## **v. Conclusion**

In the earlier introduction of the Stanley's companies, we have demonstrated that Ferdinando's Lord Strange's was the fairly complicated one, for it merged with the Leicester's Men in 1588, when the earl of Leicester, Robert Dudley, died. This company, in fact, is worthy of our further investigation. After recruiting the former Leicester's players, the 'new' Lord Strange's Men became very active on London stage. They opened at Philip Henslowe's 'Rose' from 19 February to 22 June 1592 and probably had been acting at 'the Theatre' since 1596. They were at 'the Curtain' in 1597, and later moved to 'the Globe' in 1599.<sup>94</sup> It harboured some of the most famous names in English theatrical history, such as William Kempe, Richard Burbage, Shakespeare, and Ben Jonson.<sup>95</sup> Ferdinando's Lord Strange's Men, in short, was one of the most important companies in the capital.

Such a successful company, however, did not pass from Ferdinando's hand to William's, when the latter succeeded the earldom; on the contrary, it passed to the hand of Henry Carey, then Lord Chamberlain. This transfer of patronage apparently was not out of William's lack of interest, as he was known for his fondness of drama

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<sup>94</sup> Murray, *English Dramatic Companies*, vol.1, pp.85-6. 95-6.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.36, 73, 80, 100-1, 103.

and in practice kept a playing company. One may argue that the reason why the Lord Strange's Men did not go to the protection of William was because the latter was never styled Lord Strange. This however can not explain why the patronage transferred to Carey, who had no family connection, when the heir apparent of the Stanley house customarily patronised the Lord Strange's company. The only explanation therefore should be that the Lord Strange's Men was no longer Stanley's household company in 1594, when Ferdinando died. In other words, because it was not Stanley's family troupe, it therefore did not pass to the new Lord Strange's hand when the old lord died.

This development of the Lord Strange's company is significant. In this chapter we have argued that in our period patronage of players was very much a family issue; the company could pass from the father's hand to the son's, or from the husband's to the wife's, but never passed to the patronage of someone who had no family connection. The history of Ferdinando's company however shows that this tradition was changing after the appearance of the London stage. Companies based in the capital gradually cut off their link with noble households, becoming commercial-oriented.<sup>96</sup>

This chapter also reveals that the touring of traditional household companies was closely linked to the patron's sphere of influence. A greater company may travel

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<sup>96</sup> For more discussion of the transformation, see chapter 6.

to regions popular to players, but its preference was certainly the area adjacent to its household. The Stanley's example also shows that patronage was widely employed by Tudor noble family and the sponsorship of livery players was meant to consolidate the family's influence in the region.

Before we proceed to the next chapter, I shall spare some spaces to discuss the religious attitudes of the Stanley's and their relationship with the family's patronage of drama. The lord that experienced most of the religious turmoil after the Reformation was the third earl Edward. Brought up in a Catholic county,<sup>97</sup> Edward, as Coward describes, was religiously 'very conservative'.<sup>98</sup> He opposed all the radical religious legislation of Edward VI's reign, and pursued an active role in the persecution of Protestant heresy.<sup>99</sup> His son Henry held different religious views from his father. Henry was a Protestant sympathiser. Unlike his father, who was brought up in the conservative Lancashire in the pre-Reformation period, Henry spent his youth in the Protestant court of Edward VI, and grew to adulthood in the early years of Elizabeth's reign. Henry's preference for the new religion was unequivocal: he was a patron of many leading Protestant preachers. Radical reformers (some of them were called Puritans) of the region, such as William Leigh (of Standish), Oliver Carter (of Manchester), Peter Shaw (of Bury), Edward Fleetwood (of Wigan),

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<sup>97</sup> For the religious trend of Lancashire, see Christopher Haigh, Reformation and Resistance in Tudor Lancashire (London, 1975).

<sup>98</sup> Coward, The Stanleys, p.24.

<sup>99</sup> For instance, under Mary, Edward helped to bring noted Protestants, such as George Marsh and John Bradford, before the privy council. Coward, ibid., pp.163, 165. DNB, p.938.

Richard Midgley (vicar of Rochdale), and John Caldwell (of Winwick) were all preachers of the earl. According to Halley, Henry was especially favourable to Caldwell, whom he appointed one of his chaplains, and presented him the rectory of Winwick (near Warrington), which had the reputation of being 'the richest rectory in the kingdom.'<sup>100</sup> A pamphlet of 1577 was dedicated to the earl for his 'good will to the faithful ministers and preachers of the Word' and for his 'utter hatred and detestation of the lying, false doctrine of Antichrist'.<sup>101</sup>

Although both the third and fourth earls of Derby had their individual faiths, they were not free to make decisions according to their religious preference when family interests were involved. For instance, during the dissolution of the monasteries, many Lancashire gentry families purchased ex-monastic lands. The third earl Edward, although a Catholic, as Robert Halley put it, 'was not negligent of the golden opportunity,' acquiring a considerable additions to his patrimonial estates.<sup>102</sup>

In fact, apart from economic considerations for family interest, being a regional leader of conservative counties under a reforming King, the masters of the Stanley family usually faced a dilemma. If they stood with the conservative opinions of the

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<sup>100</sup> Halley, Lancashire, pp.127-8, 177. Cf. Coward, ibid., p.166.

<sup>101</sup> Coward, ibid., p.166.

<sup>102</sup> Halley even asserted that Edward has once told Goerge Marsh, a Bolton martyr, that 'the true religion was that religion which had most good luck.' See Halley, Lancashire, p.56.

region resisting religious change, they would inevitably invite royal displeasure; but if they overlooked the religious sentiments of their fellow countrymen to impose the religious policy of the crown, then they would alienate themselves from their social circle and, in the case of Lancashire, the majority of the greater land-owning families. Facing this difficulty, the Stanleys chose not to make firm decisions one way or the other. For instance, in the Pilgrimage of the Grace of 1536, earl Edward complied with the king's wish mustering an army to suppress the rebellion. But, as Christopher Haigh pointed out, his support for the king was dilatory: he delayed his declaration for the crown, he may have given the abbot of Sawley a former warning for his attack, and he was reluctant to punish the defeated rebels.<sup>103</sup> Edward's response to the 1536 insurrection was typical of the Stanleys; whenever they were trapped into a controversial condition, they behaved pragmatically and sensibly. They never allowed their religious sympathies to jeopardise family interest.<sup>104</sup>

The Stanley's principle of pragmatism also reflected in their patronage of acting companies; they did not impose their religious preference on their fondness of drama. Extracts from the Stanley 'Household Book' recorded how the Stanley household spent their Christmastide in 1588 at Lathom House:

The xxviii of December<sup>105</sup>—On Sondaye M<sup>r</sup> Vicker of Ratchedalle pretched;

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<sup>103</sup> Coward, *The Stanleys*, p.164. Another example was the earl's oscillation during the rise of the northern earls in 1569. See *ibid.*, p.166.

<sup>104</sup> Like his father Edward, Earl Henry cannot appear to be too committed to his anti-Catholic cause. He maintained his father's contact with Catholic gentlemen and kept Sir Richard Shireburn, a sympathiser of the old faith, as leading member of his household. See *ibid.*

<sup>105</sup> The 'Household Book' usually used the last day of the week, the Saturday, to record the week. In

Tvseday M<sup>r</sup> ffoxes came; Wednesdaye was Christemas daie, w<sup>ch</sup> daie M<sup>r</sup> Leigh pretched; Thursdaye M<sup>r</sup> Phillippes pretched, & M<sup>r</sup> Carter & M<sup>r</sup> Doctor Joynes came.

The iiii of Januarii—Sondaye M<sup>r</sup> Carter pretched, at w<sup>ch</sup> was dyvers strandgers; on Monday came M<sup>r</sup> Stewarde; on Tvsedaye the reste of my L. Cownsill & also S<sup>r</sup> Jhon Savadge, & at nyght a Playe was had in the Halle, & the same nyghte my L. Strandge came home; on Wednesdaye M<sup>r</sup> fletewood pretched, and the same daye yong M<sup>r</sup> Halsoll & his wiffe came; on Thursdaye M<sup>r</sup> Irelande of the Hutte came; Fryday S<sup>r</sup> Jhon Savadge dep<sup>t</sup>ed, & the same daye M<sup>r</sup> Hesketh, M<sup>r</sup> Anderton, M<sup>r</sup> Assheton came, & also my L. Bushoppe & S<sup>r</sup> Jhon Byron.

The xi of Januarii—Sondaye M<sup>r</sup> Caldewall pretched, & that nyght the Plaiers plaid; Monday my L. Buchoppe pretched, & the same daye M<sup>r</sup> Trafforth, M<sup>r</sup> Edw. Stanley, M<sup>r</sup> Mydleton of Leighton came; on Tvsedaye S<sup>r</sup> Ric. Shirborne, M<sup>r</sup> Stewarde, my L. Bushoppe, S<sup>r</sup> Jhon Byron, & many others dep<sup>t</sup>ed; Wednesdaye my L. removed to New P<sup>r</sup>ke; on Frydaye M<sup>r</sup> Norres & M<sup>r</sup> Torbocke & M<sup>r</sup> Tildesley came & wente.<sup>106</sup>

Clearly, dramatic performance was an important component of the Stanley Christmas feast. On 31 December, New Year's eve, a play was held in the Hall, and on the fifth of January another play performed. In the entries at Knowsley of the Christmastide in 1587, we also find that 'Players wente awaie' on Saturday, 30 December.<sup>107</sup> From the records we also find that Christmas was a significant occasion for family celebration: important family friends came to spend the holiday together; and the earl's religious proteges, including Midgley, Leigh, Carter, Fleetwood and Caldwell,

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other words, the extract recorded under the title of 'the xxviii of December' means the Saturday of the week was the 28th of December.

<sup>106</sup> Stanley Papers, II, pp.56-7.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., p.46. Although we cannot find from the 'Household Book' when did the players come, this entry does reveal that players were staying in the household during the Christmas (certainly for the celebration) of the year. There is some confusion as the patron of this company is concerned. According to Raines's edition of the 'Household Book', the entry was recorded as 'on Saturday S<sup>r</sup> Tho. Hesketh, Players wente awaie,' which implies Sir Thomas and a company of players (probably the Derby's players) left the household on the same day. The REED edition recorded the entry as 'on saturdaye Sir Thomas hesketh plaiers wente awaie.' Without a comma between Hesketh and players, the REED editor, David George, (as shown in his patron list) believes that the company was Thomas Hesketh's players. See REED, Lancashire, p.180.

preached for the household.

But what is interesting is not how the household spent their Christmas, but how they combined their religious ceremony with holiday recreations. Earl Henry was a Protestant,<sup>108</sup> and many of the family religious friends were labelled by contemporaries as Puritans. But it seems that both Henry and his religious friends were not troubled by the discrepancy which Puritans were supposed to have about drama. As Halley commented on the Stanley's Christmas celebration:

These Puritans, however they liked the players, seem to have enjoyed their Christmas, for they stayed at Lathom until the feast having come to an end, 'his lordshippe's howse brake uppe.'<sup>109</sup>

Certainly, the earl and his friends found no objection in their religion in enjoying drama. Another evidence supporting this remark is that, according to the 'Household Book', plays were performed from time to time in the Stanley household on Sundays.

The xii of Julii [1588]—...Sonday M<sup>r</sup> Stanley of Yollow & his doughter & his son in law, M<sup>r</sup> Leigh, M<sup>r</sup> Henry Stanley senior & M<sup>r</sup> Henry Stanley junior, & many other gent<sup>n</sup>, & the Vicker of Ratchedalle pretched, the same daie the Quenes Players plaied ii severall nyghtes...<sup>110</sup>

13 September [1589]—...Sondaie M<sup>r</sup> Leigh preached & the Quenes Players played in the afternoone, & my L. of Essex<sup>s</sup> at nyght.'<sup>111</sup>

Sabbath prohibitions did not appear to have affected the lifestyle of the Stanleys. They preached the new religion on Sunday morning, and they enjoyed the plays at

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<sup>108</sup> Henry was sometimes considered as Puritan.

<sup>109</sup> Halley, Lancashire, vol.1, p.129.

<sup>110</sup> Stanley Papers, II, p.62.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., p.65.



night. Why was there such a disparity between the Stanleys's religion and their pastimes? As Lancashire, located in the isolated north-west England, was a conservative county and was known for its tardiness in reacting to the changes of the 'outside world', it is very possible that the Stanleys, although attracted to the new religion, maintained their 'Catholic' habit of celebration important occasions by theatrical activities.

The Stanleys were usually reserved in propagating their religious views; following the family tradition of prudence, they always gave their practical interest priority. Many other nobles of the period however were much more determined in revealing and promoting their personal beliefs. They even continued to do so when their religious preference was contrary to that of the monarch. Livery players hence became a useful means for them to achieve this aim. In chapters four and five, I will continue the discussion of those noble patrons who purposely employed an acting troupe to propagate their own beliefs. I selected a number of important noble patrons who were famous for their religious enthusiasm to see how they made use of patronage of drama to achieve the aim. But in the coming chapter, I will firstly investigate those playing troupes that we have not yet examined—regional companies.

### Chapter 3: Patronage of Players (2): Regional Companies

Regional companies can be divided into two groups: those named by locations and those patronised by regional figures. For our convenience, in the following discussion, the former will be called local companies, whereas the latter will be termed regional noble companies, so as to distinguish them from those greater aristocratic troupes discussed in the previous chapter. There are 132 entries for local companies in our period. Compared to regional noble troupes, it is more difficult to identify these acting companies named by their town of origin. The first reason is its inaccuracy of spelling. English spelling in the sixteenth century was far from consistent; in many cases, the origin of the players was recorded in a way very different from its modern spelling, which makes the work of identification very difficult.<sup>1</sup> For instance, location names like 'Howden' in the records of Selby Abbey (Yorkshire), or 'Bollyngbooke' and 'Wysbyche' at Leverington (Cambridgeshire), can not be further specified without more information.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, even if the correct spelling of a place is identified, in many cases the definite location of the town can still be arguable. For example, the St Brannock's Churchwardens' Accounts recorded payments to 'players of Pylton' in 1564-5 and 1565-6 respectively. This 'Pilton'

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<sup>1</sup> This uncertainty also happen to those companies named by their patrons, but as acting troupes of the sort were mostly named by their patron's title (instead of name), and these patrons were usually celebrated national or regional figures, hence only very few troupes are not traceable. Cf. chapter 2.

<sup>2</sup> 'Leverington Parish Accounts', *Fenland Notes and Queries*, 7 (1909), pp.299, 300. Glynne Wickham, 'Extracts from Account Rolls of Obedientaries of Selby Abbey', in his *Early English Stages 1300 to 1600*, 3 vols. (London, 1959-1981), pp.338-9.

could be either the one in Devon, or the one in Somerset.<sup>3</sup> And the 'players of Richmond' in the Beverley records of 1566 could come from the Richmond in Yorkshire or from the one in Surrey.<sup>4</sup> With the help of record editors, some of these problems have been solved. The players of 'Mylton' in Launceston records (Cornwall), for instance, according to the suggestion of the REED editors, probably came from 'Milton Abbey.'<sup>5</sup>

How many details of a company were given depends on the recorder. Most troupes were named by their hometown, but sometimes only the county or area that players came from was noted. For instance, Barnstaple rewarded 3s 4d to players of 'Cornwall' in 1534-5, while Plymouth paid those from 'Wiltshire' 10s in 1569-70.<sup>6</sup> The most active troupe named by their county was players from Essex; they appeared in the records of Lydd and New Romney (Kent) and Rye (Sussex).<sup>7</sup> Other companies, such as players of Derbyshire, Lancashire, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, and Wales, also appear in our records.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> John Wasson (ed.), REED, Devon (Toronto, 1986), pp.52-3.

<sup>4</sup> Diana Wyatt (ed.), 'REED, Beverley' (forthcoming). But as the record appears in Beverley, it is more probable that players were from the Richmond in Yorkshire. However, the possibility of other kinds can not be totally excluded.

<sup>5</sup> See R.C. Hays, C.E. McGee, S.L. Joyce, and E.S. Newlyn (eds.), REED, Dorset/Cornwall (Toronto, 1999), p.161.

<sup>6</sup> REED, Devon, pp.38, 239.

<sup>7</sup> James M. Gibson (ed.), 'REED, Kent' and Cameron Louis (ed.), 'REED, Sussex' (forthcoming).

<sup>8</sup> See 'REED, Beverley', 'REED, Kent', Alice Hamilton (ed.), 'REED, Leicestershire', and John Coldewey (ed.), 'Nottinghamshire' (forthcoming). And Malone Collection, vol.2, pt.3 (London, 1931), p.266.

With these understandings of the records, further discussion of local troupes can now be carried on. From the 132 entries of local players, 77 companies are identified. An acting company from Brookland (Kent) was the most active one; they provide 25 entries. Other local companies containing more than ten entries are that from Lydd (23), Romney (20), and Canterbury (13); notably, all these troupes were from Kent. Local players with no less than five records are those from Essex (8), Coventry (Warwickshire, 7), Totnes (Devon, 7), Hythe (Kent, 6), and Elham (Kent, 5). Apart from these 9 troupes, the remaining 68 companies provide less than five entries.<sup>9</sup> More interesting information emerges if we combine the records of regional noble companies into our discussion. Some general background of this group of livery players, however, should first be introduced.

There are 96 entries of regional noble companies; they belong to 80 different troupes.<sup>10</sup> Compared with the local companies discussed above, it is easier to identify the names of these troupes, mostly under their master's name or title. Nevertheless, as these regional patrons were mostly local figures, it is less likely to provide as

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<sup>9</sup> For a complete list of local companies, see appendix 5.

<sup>10</sup> As mentioned in chapter 2, regional noble companies refer to those troupes named by their patron and visiting only one county. This distinction has its defect, for a playing company could have travelled to a limit region of the country, which cover more than one county. For instance, Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports's players seldom travelled to areas beyond the supervision of their patron; their connection with the region was indisputable. However, it is not easy to define these troupes touring more than one county as 'regional' without causing some controversies; to define these troupes toured more than one county as 'regional' can be somewhat arbitrary. I hence exclude these kind of troupes from our current discussion of regional noble companies. More discussions on companies with strong regional links, such as Lord Warden's players, are left to the later part of this chapter.

complete a picture of their careers and lives as of greater noble patrons. Among the entire 80 companies, there are eight troupes whose master can not be identified. For instance, the patron of 'lord presedent's' players, who visited William Francis's household of Ticknall Hall (Derbyshire) in 1539-40 and 1540-6, can not be further identified as no sufficient details of the office are available. The earl of Exeter, whose players performed at Beverley in 1568, remains unknown to us, for there was no peer enjoying the title between 1539 and 1605.<sup>11</sup> Apart from these instances, patrons in many cases are known to us only by their surname, such as Masters Richardson, Sampall, or Denny;<sup>12</sup> thus, apart from their family origin, very little information can be drawn from these records. If these indiscernible companies are excluded, there are 62 regional noble troupes whose patrons can be firmly identified.

Regional noble companies were secondary to the greater ones not only in the range of their travelling, but also in their entry numbers; the former usually yield a very limited number of entries only. In the 80 companies of the group, Mr Finch's troupe was the most active one; they visited two Kentish towns, New Romeny and Lydd, in two subsequent years, 1560-1 and 1561-2 and provided four entries in total.<sup>13</sup> Next to Mr Finch's players, there are two companies containing three entries: the bishop of Exeter's and Anthony Kingston's.<sup>14</sup> Nine companies have two entries:

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<sup>11</sup> John Wasson and Barbara D. Palmer (eds.), 'REED, 'Derbyshire' and 'REED, Beverley' (forthcoming). For the details of these eight companies, see appendix 5.

<sup>12</sup> There are fifteen patrons of the sort in our records. See appendix. 5.

<sup>13</sup> 'REED, Kent' (forthcoming).

<sup>14</sup> The bishop of Exeter's players have experienced two masters: James Turberville (c.1495-1559)

Sir John Beryn's, Mr Henry Berkeley's, Mr Richardson's, Mr Smith's, Peter Edgecombe's, Sir William Pickering's, Master of the Revels', and Lords President's and Luxborough's.<sup>15</sup> The remaining 68 troupes contain only one entry. The survey shows that regional noble companies were subordinate to their greater counterparts in both the range and scale of their touring.

The two groups of acting troupes, local and regional noble, are classified as regional because their touring was confined to a certain area only. A survey of the counties visited by local companies shows that most of them did not travel extensively. The most widely-toured troupe, players of Coventy, only visited four counties—Gloucestershire, Kent, Leicestershire, and Worcestershire. Players of London, second on the list, toured to Devon, Gloucestershire, and Kent. Apart from these two companies, no other troupe in the group ever performed in more than two counties: 15 visited two counties, and 60 visited one. In other words, most local companies only travelled in one or two regions.

The survey also suggests that local companies also tended to tour in their home county only. Among the 77 local companies, 13 of them provide only insufficient information (their home county can not be identified), which excludes them from our inspection. Of the remaining 64 troupes, 39 of them performed in their home county,

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and his successor William Alley (c.1510-70). See REED, Devon, pp.43, 64, and 235, cf. 'patron list' at the end of the volume.

<sup>15</sup> Master of the Revels in 1569-70 was Sir Thomas Beniar. Lords President and Luxborough are not identifiable.

and if we extend the definition of 'home connection' to those counties adjoining to the one that players came from, we then find that 14 more troupes can be added to original 39. In other words, amongst the 64 local companies, 53 of them performed in county(s) with 'home connection'; only 11 of them travelled to areas without a clear link with home. And these 11 troupes also did not travel without pattern: players of Bristol did not venture to the far north, while those of Hull never bothered to travel to the south.<sup>16</sup> Local players, on the whole, only toured a very specific region; compared to their counterparts patronised by greater nobles, they were certainly 'regional' performers.

Chapter 2 of this thesis demonstrates that a great noble's patronage of players had much to do with his need to consolidate his regional influence. Is this conclusion also applicable to the patronage of regional companies? A study of the touring of regional troupes and the sphere of influence of their patrons shall provide the answer. In the following section, the activity of the most important regional company, Lord Warden's players, is fully scrutinised.

### **i. Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports and His Players**

The Cinque Ports, which originally meant the five 'Head Ports', Hastings, Romney, Hythe, Dover and Sandwich, in the sixteenth century referred to a group of towns on

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<sup>16</sup> Players of Bristol performed in Dorset in 1567-8, 1568-9, and in Nottinghamshire in 1574-5. Players of Hull visited Leicestershire in 1567-8, 1568-9, and Nottinghamshire in 1573-4. See REED, Dorset/Cornwall, and 'REED, Nottinghamshire', and 'REED, Leicestershire' (forthcoming).

the south-east coast of England.<sup>17</sup> In earlier times, these ports were of strategic importance; the office of the Lord Warden was instituted by the Crown to ensure the Portsmen's loyalty to the King. This was less the case by our period, however, when the military functions of the ports were replaced by other better-equipped harbours, such as Southampton.<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, the status of the Lord Warden did not decline accordingly with the ports; on the contrary, the degeneration of the region had made Portsmen, who used to enjoy fairly equal status with the Lord Warden, inferior in authority to the latter.<sup>19</sup> The Warden, namely, in our period enjoyed an unchallenged authority over the ports.

There was a long tradition of Lord Wardens patronising players. From 1529/30 onwards, the Lord Warden's players appear almost incessantly in our records until the end of the 1550s; and all five Wardens of our period, Edward Guildford (1521-34), George Boleyn (1534-36), Arthur Plantagenet (c.1536-1541/2), Sir Thomas Cheney (Cheyne) (1542-58), and William Brook (1559-97), kept an acting company.<sup>20</sup> Guildford was the first Tudor Lord Warden to keep an acting troupe. His company first appeared in 1529/30, when performing at Southampton (Hampshire).

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<sup>17</sup> Ivan Green, *The Books of the Cinque Ports: Their Origin and Development, Heyday and Decline* (Buckingham: Barracuda Book Ltd., 1984), p.85. For more about the construction of the Cinque Ports, see K.M.E. Murray, *The Constitutional History of the Cinque Ports* (Manchester, 1935), p.1.

<sup>18</sup> Green, *Ibid.*, p.216.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.89-90. One good example was Lord Warden's significant influence over the Ports' Parliamentary election. See pp.95-7.

<sup>20</sup> The other two Wardens were Prince Henry (later Henry VIII), Sir Edward Poyning (c.1504-21),. According to REED, 'Patrons List', Poyning's duty seems to have a interruption between 1511-13. There is no record for Poyning's players in our data base, whereas, Henry's company never travelled



There is no record of their activity in the following year, but the troupe commenced their continuous touring the year after: they visited Rye (Sussex) in 1532-4, and Sandwich (Kent) and Rye in 1533-4.<sup>21</sup> George Boleyn, Lord Rochford and brother of Queen Anne, replaced Guildford, becoming the next Warden in 1534. Although Boleyn, who died in 1536, did not hold the post long, his company was active in the Cinque Ports area during his wardenship: they performed at Dover,<sup>22</sup> Lydd, New Romney (Kent), and Rye (Sussex) in 1535-6.

Arthur Plantagenet, Lord Lisle, was the next Warden; he succeeded to the post in around 1536. Plantagenet's company began to tour the provinces as Lord Warden's players after that time and was fairly active up to the end of Lisle's wardenship. They visited Dover, Lydd, Sandwich (Kent), and Rye (Sussex) in 1537-8, performed at Cromwell's household in London,<sup>23</sup> Lydd, New Romney (twice), Sandwich (twice) (Kent), Rye (Sussex) in 1538-9, and at Bristol (Gloucestershire), Dover (twice), Faversham, Lydd, New Romney (twice) (Kent), and Rye (Sussex) in 1539-40. Lisle died on 3 March 1542. Four entries for his players appeared in the last

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under the title of Lord Warden's players.

<sup>21</sup> George Boleyn succeeded Guildford becoming Lord Warden on 3 June 1534 till his death, 17 May 1536. The patron of the troupe in 1533-4 could therefore be either Guildford or Boleyn.

<sup>22</sup> Boleyn received the French admiral Brion, who was sent to Henry VIII in embassy on his landing at Dover, in November 1534 (after Boleyn became Lord Warden). Boleyn entertained the French admiral at Dover four days till his whole train had disembarked and conducted him to Blackheath. Could try to find out more about the occasion. See, for instance, J. S. Brewer, J. Gairdner, and R.H. Brodie (eds.), Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the reign of Henry VIII, 21 vols. and addenda (London, 1862-1932), vol.7, nos.1416, 1427.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 14(2), no.782.

year of the Lord's life: Dover, Folkestone, Lydd (Kent), and Rye (Sussex).<sup>24</sup>

Sir Thomas Cheyne (or Cheney) was appointed Lord Warden in 1542; he held the office until his death in 1558.<sup>25</sup> His company appears in our records annually before 1546: they were at Canterbury, Dover, Folkestone, New Romney (Kent) and Rye (Sussex) in 1542-3, at Folkestone, Hythe (Kent), and Rye (Sussex) in 1543-4, at New Romney in 1544-5, and at Dover in 1545-6. The troupe seems to retire almost completely from the touring business after 1546; in the last ten years of Cheyne's wardenship, there is only one entry of its performance, which was at Sandwich in 1549-50. William Brooke, Lord Cobham, succeeded Cheyne becoming the next Lord Warden in 1558. Brooke however did not take up the patronage of players immediately. On the contrary, his company did not travel on road until 1568.<sup>26</sup> It visited Folkstone (Kent) in that year, Canterbury, Dover, Lydd, New Romney (Kent), and Rye (Sussex) in 1569-70, and Canterbury again in 1570-1. The patronage turned out to be momentary; nothing was heard from the company after 1571.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Although there is possibility that the some of these entries might belong to the company under the new warden (for some accounts, such as the Chamberlains' Accounts of Lydd, run from July 1541 to July 1542), but as Lisle did in March 1542, it is still more possible that these performance took place when Lisle was still the Warden.

<sup>25</sup> S.T. Bindoff assumed Cheyne acquired the office of Lord Warden in 1536, which was a mistake. See Bindoff (ed), The House of Commons 1509-1558 (London, 1982), vol.1, p.634.

<sup>26</sup> There was one entry of Brooke's players in 1563-4 at Gloucester (Gloucestershire). But it was recorded as 'lorde Cobhames playeres.' See Audrey Douglas and Peter Greenfield (eds.), REED, Cumberland/Westmorland/Gloucestershire, (Toronto, 1986), pp.299-300.

<sup>27</sup> Brooke has left his office as the Warden in 1596 and was appointed Lord Chamberlain in August of the same year. Although the four entries in 1596-7 of 'Lord Chamberlain's players' may refer to Brooke's players, it was by no means the Lord Warden's troupe we are discussing here. For more about Brooke's career, see G[eorge] E[dward] C[okayne], The Complete Peerage of England, Scotlant, Ireland, Great Britain and the United Kingdom, extant, extinct or dormant, 2nd edition, 13

The fact that the Lord Warden's players appeared almost annually in our records between 1529 and 1550<sup>28</sup> suggests that the company was more affiliated to the office than to the person of the Warden, because it shows that their performance was not affected by the change of the wardenship. This statement is confirmed further by the fact that most Lord Wardens of our period, apart from Plantagenet, did not keep their own playing troupe beyond their period of wardenship,<sup>29</sup> and can be verified by scrutinising the touring pattern of Plantagenet's players. Plantagenet began to retain his own players as early as in the mid-1520s; his troupe then travelled mainly under the title of Lord Lisle's company.<sup>30</sup> Plantagenet took up the wardenship in around 1536 and his players were accordingly called Lord Warden's thereafter. Although there was no evident interruption of Plantagenet's patronage, the touring pattern of his company certainly underwent some transformation after 1536. Before that year, Plantagenet's players, although can be seen on the Kentish circuit

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vols. (ed.) Vicary Gibbs (London, 1910- ), vol.3, pp.348-9. For a complete list of the touring of Lord Warden's players, see appendix 6.

<sup>28</sup> Only in 1531, 1547, and 1548 that no record of the company is available.

<sup>29</sup> Two entries in Gloucestershire (Gloucester and Bristol), in 1563-4 and 1569-70 respectively, recorded William Brooke's troupe as 'Lord Cobham's players'. Brooke, Lord Cobham, was then Lord Warden. It is therefore not clear the payment was thus recorded because there was another troupe under the same master known as 'Lord Cobham's players' or was it because the Brooke was better known in Gloucestershire as Lord Cobham than as Lord Warden. But as there are some doubts about the entries, I did not include them into the 48 entries of Lord Warden's players discussed here. See REED, *Cumberland/Westmorland/Gloucestershire*, pp.299-300; Mark Pilkinton (ed.), *REED, Bristol* (Toronto, 1997), p.78.

<sup>30</sup> They were sometimes recorded (at Dover) as the company of Lord Deputy of Calais. See 'REED, Kent' (forthcoming).

occasionally,<sup>31</sup> also spent a considerable time in the western counties: they were at Andover in 1525-7, at Southampton in 1526-7 (both in Hampshire), at Poole (Dorset) in 1531-2, and at Bristol (Gloucestershire) in 1539-40. This custom however changed after Plantagenet became the Warden; his company soon focused solely on the Cinque Ports region: they retired from the western circuit completely and spent much time in touring the Kentish one.<sup>32</sup> As no information is available, it is difficult to tell whether the 'old' Plantagenet's company disbanded or was merged with the Lord Warden's. The story of the company however shows that Plantagenet's wardenship did strongly influence the touring pattern of his troupe; the players turned their attention to the Cinque Ports towns after their master took an office there.

In fact, reviewing the touring of the Lord Warden's company in our period, we find that the activity of the company was very much confined to the Cinque Ports area: only 6 out of the entire 56 entries for the company are yielded from locations outside the region.<sup>33</sup> Combining this fact with our discussion above, it is safe to conclude that the Lord Warden's company was closely attached to the Cinque Ports

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<sup>31</sup> They were at Lydd (Kent) in 1531-2, at Rye (Sussex) in 1532-3, and at Dover (Kent) in 1534-5 and 1535-6.

<sup>32</sup> Within the six years of Plantagenet's wardenship, his company yield 23 entries and apart from one performance held at Cromwell's household in London, the remaining records are all contributed by the Cinque Ports towns. For a complete list of the company's touring, see appendix 6.

<sup>33</sup> The six entries are 1529-30 at Southampton (Hampshire), 1538 in London (Cromwell's household), 1539-40 at Bristol (Gloucestershire), 1563-4 at Gloucester (Gloucestershire), 1569-70 at Bristol (Gloucestershire), and 1596-7 at Bath (Somerset). The company was recorded in the 1563-4 and 1569-70 entries as Lord Cobham's players (William Brooke, the Lord Warden then, was styled Lord Cobham), whereas the payment in the last entry (in 1596-7) was made to the company of Lord Chamberlain, who could be either Brooke or George or Henry Carey. See James Stokes with Robert J. Alexander (eds.), Somerset, including Bath (Toronto, 1996), p.17.

area and to the warden. This conclusion is significant for it not only confirms that the company was a regional troupe, but, more importantly, it reveals the close link between the company and the wardenship. In short, it can confidently be asserted that the acting troupe was attached to the office of the Warden; it served whoever took up the wardenship and its operation was within the warden's sphere of influence. One more question can therefore be induced from this statement; that is why the Lord Warden kept an acting company? And the answer is likely to be that it is because the warden, who was the representative of the monarch, needed a playing troupe, which wore his livery and therefore represented the master, to supplement his occasional absence, and to consolidate his and also the central government's control over the region. In other words, the patronage of the Lord Warden's players was closely linked to the patron's influence in the area.

In previous chapters, we have demonstrated that payments to players reflected the relationship between the company and the locality. Do rewards to Lord Warden's players reveal the special influence enjoyed by their master in the region? To answer this question, a survey of payments made to the company is given. After assessing the average amount received by Lord Warden's company in each decade, the following results emerge: they received 1s 8*d* in the 1520s, 6*s* in the 1530s, 4*s* 10*d* in the 1540s, (no record in the 1550s), 8*s* 11*d* in the 1560s, and 10*s* in the 1570s. The first and the last figures are not representative as there is only one entry in each of the two decades; therefore, only the three more suggestive figures, that of the 1530s, 1540s, and 1560s, are given further investigation. Comparing these three figures to

the average payments received by all livery players in each decade, 6s 5d in the 1530s, 6s 7d in the 1540s, and 9s 4d in the 1560s,<sup>34</sup> we found that Lord Warden's players were usually paid less.

Apart from this fact, many pieces of significant information are also given in the survey. Firstly, it shows that Lord Warden's players were very poorly paid in the 1540s, compared to other decades. Although the Warden's players were usually paid less than the standard amount, the gap between their payment and the average one was never as large as that in the 1540s: they received only 73% of the average payment of the decade.<sup>35</sup> The difference becomes even larger if the payment of the company is compared to the expected payment of the decade, 8s 6d; it achieved only 57% of the amount it should have received.<sup>36</sup> The two figures, thus, show that Lord Warden's players were badly rewarded in the decade. This however is not the only unusual facet of the payment of the 1540s. Comparing the amounts they received in the 1530s and the 1540s, we find that their reward in the latter decade was even lower than that in the previous one. As inflation continued to bite in the sixteenth century, the decreased revenue of the company in the 1540s was certainly abnormal.

Why was the company so badly paid in the 1540s? One can trace back to their master to find the answer. The two Lord Wardens in the 1540s were Arthur

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<sup>34</sup> For the definition and a complete list of average payments, see chapter 1 and appendix 2.

<sup>35</sup> In the 1530s, their reward reached 92% of the average payment and in the 1560s, 96%.

<sup>36</sup> The expected amount of all livery players in each decade is made based on the inflation rate. For

Plantagenet and Thomas Cheney. The average amount paid to the company under the two masters was 6s 6d and 4s 10d respectively. The figures show that, although the Lord Warden's company remained the same between 1537 and 1546,<sup>37</sup> their rewards varied when their master changed; in other words, the same Lord Warden's company, which was supposed to provide entertainment of the same quality, was paid better when their master was Plantagenet.<sup>38</sup>

This, however, is not the whole story, for payment to Cheney's company was not particularly bad, when compared that to other Wardens': Guildford's troupe received 2s 7d, Boleyn's 4s 3d, and Brooke's 9s 1d; in other words, these figures are not especially revealing unless they are compared to the average payments of the time. Guildford's patronage was mainly in the 1530s. The average payment of the decade was 6s 6d, which means his company received only around 40% of the standard payment. Boleyn's patronage was also in the 1530s. His company was better treated, their reward being about 66% of the average amount. Among the three, Brooke's players were the most generously paid; their payment reached more than 97% of the standard one. Compared to Guildford's and Boleyn's times, players under Cheney's sponsorship were certainly not ill-treated; their payment reached more than 73% of the average amount. In fact, once we recognise the fact that Lord

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more details, see chapter 1 and appendix 2.

<sup>37</sup> The troupe appeared in our records consecutively from 1537 to 1546 and took a fairly regular itinerary, performing mainly at Kentish and Sussex towns. For details, see appendix. 6.

<sup>38</sup> This result shows that not only would the office of the patron affect the rewards of his company, the person taking the post could also make some differences.



Warden's players were paid less, we can conclude that it is the 'high standard' of payment made to Plantagenet's players in the 1530s that was 'exceptional': his company received a payment almost equal to the average one.<sup>39</sup>

The correct question therefore turns out to be why Lord Warden's players were better rewarded under Plantagenet's patronage? And the answer is likely to be that it is because Lisle enjoyed higher social status than other Wardens did. Although all Tudor Lord Wardens commanded indisputable authority over the Cinque Ports, Plantagenet was the only one of noble birth and national influence.<sup>40</sup> He was a natural son of Edward IV,<sup>41</sup> and had held various important missions and offices, such as vice admiral and lord deputy of Calais, during his lifetime. When he died in February 1542, he had served the King for more than thirty years;<sup>42</sup> his estates were dispersed in various counties of the realm, including Devon, Dorset, Lancashire, Leicester, Sussex, Warwickshire, and Wiltshire.<sup>43</sup>

The exceptional generosity experienced by Plantagenet's players can thus be

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<sup>39</sup> The average payment to Plantagenet's players was 6s 6d, while the standard amount was 6s 6d in the 1530s, and 6s 7d in the 1540s.

<sup>40</sup> Although George Boleyn was Queen Anne's brother, his being favoured by the King was short-lived, which made it difficult for him to establish his nationwide influence.

<sup>41</sup> He was born in 1480 by one Elizabeth Lucie.

<sup>42</sup> Plantagenet began to serve Henry VIII as early as in 1509. He was then an esquire of Henry's bodyguard.

<sup>43</sup> See Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee (eds.), Dictionary of National Biography, 63 with supplementary volumes (London, 1885- ), vol.15, pp.1285-7. 'REED, Patron's List'.



explained. But there is another question raised by the survey which remains unsolved; that is, why were the Lord Warden's company usually poorly paid? To explain this fact, one is tempted to link the phenomenon with the character of Lord Warden's troupe as a regional company. Graph 2 of this thesis shows that local acting companies were usually less generously paid; Lord Warden's company could have been 'ill-treated' therefore, as their patron enjoyed local influence only.<sup>44</sup> The regional nature of the troupe could be one reason for the low payment of the company; there, however, is another possibility: the comparatively small reward received by the company could be caused by the lower rewarding standard adopted by the region towards livery players. In other words, the Warden's troupe was not wrongly treated; 'all' travelling players were paid less in the Cinque Ports region. To ascertain which one is the answer, a comparison between payments to Lord Warden's company and those to others is given, and three major towns in the itinerary of Lord Warden's players are inspected.<sup>45</sup>

The first town is Dover. Lord Warden's players performed there in 1535-6, 1537-8, 1539-40, 1541-2, 1542-3, 1545-6, and 1569-70. 1569-70 is the year that contains more companies for comparison: five troupes visited the town in the year. Among them, Master of the Revels' players were the best rewarded: they got 13*s* 4*d* with 'a pottle of wyne' of 8*d*. The earl of Leicester's and Lord Rich's players enjoyed similar treatment: they were each paid 13*s* 4*d*. Compared to these three companies,

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<sup>44</sup> See chapter 1.

<sup>45</sup> The following data is based on the forthcoming REED collections of Kent and Sussex.

the servants of Lord Warden, William Brooke, were less generously rewarded, receiving 11s. The least-paid troupe on the list is Lord Mountjoy's, who were rewarded 10s. The 1569-70 entries suggest that the Dover authorities held an informal payment list: noble companies 'of the first rank' were given 13s 4d; Lord Warden's troupe, which belonged to 'the second rank', was paid 11s; and players of Lord Mountjoy, who enjoyed less social status and had no special connection with the locality, were rewarded 10s. Brooke's players, though not the most favoured of the town, were better treated than Mountjoy's, and this seems to be attributed to the regional influence of the master.

New Romney is another location under inspection. Lord Warden's players visited the town in 1535-6, 1538-9, 1539-40, 1542-3, 1544-5, and 1569-70. Among these six years, 1539-40 is the year with the most information. There were three companies performing at New Romney in 1539-40: the King's players, Lord Warden's, and those from Rochester (Kent). These troupes visiting in 1539-40 represent the three groups of livery players in our category: royal, noble, and local companies. So, how were they paid? The King's players were given 2s 8d as their reward, with 4d extra for their expenses. The troupe of Lord Warden, Plantagenet, were given 3s 4d as their payment and 8d for expenses. Players from Rochester, by contrast, were given 8d only for their performance and no further remuneration was made for their expenses. The survey shows that Lord Warden's players were the most generously supported; the New Romney authorities spent 4s in total on them. The King's troupe was in second place, receiving 3s in total for its performance. The

players of Rochester were the most poorly treated, with less than one shilling being spent on them. Listing the three troupes according to the status of their patron, we find that the noble troupe was the best paid, the royal one the second, and the local one the least. Chapter 1 of this thesis has demonstrated that, generally speaking, royal companies were the best paid amongst the three groups of livery players; in other words, the fact that Lord Warden's players surpassed the King's players, being the best-rewarded company amongst the three, was unusual. The result suggests that 'regional connection' was better valued by New Romney than other qualities; Plantagenet's troupe was best rewarded, because their master was the Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports.<sup>46</sup>

Rye, which contains most entries for the Lord Warden's players, is the last town in our investigation. The company visited the town in 1533-4, 1535-6, 1537-8, 1538-9, 1539-40, 1541-2, 1542-3, 1543-4, and 1569-70. 1569-70 is the year yielding the most information: four companies performed at the town in that year: Lord Warden's, archbishop of Canterbury's, earl of Leicester's, and Lord Rich's. According to their payments, the troupes can be listed as follows: Lord Warden's, 13s 4d, archbishop of Canterbury's and Leicester's, 10s, and Lord Rich's, 6s 8d. The list reconfirms our earlier argument in the respect to New Romney; that is, servants of the archbishop of Canterbury and Leicester received better payments than those of

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<sup>46</sup> Similar condition can be seen in the entries of 1569-70. In that year, Lord Warden's players were much better rewarded (10s 8d) than earl of Leicester's (6s 8d), whose master apparently enjoyed greater national fame and influence than the Warden. See 'REED, Kent' (forthcoming).

Lord Rich, because their masters enjoyed higher reputation and wider influence.<sup>47</sup> But it was Lord Warden's players that got the highest reward, and that is because their master was particularly influential in the town.

The survey of rewards given by the three towns shows that 'regional connection' was always an important consideration for local authorities, and it is for this reason that Lord Warden's players were on the whole well paid. But if the Warden's servants were usually well received, why were their payments always under national level? The reason certainly was not that the company was poorly treated; it is more likely to be that players were usually paid less in the region. Returning to the three towns we have inspected, in comparing the payment standard of the three locations to the same company, we find that New Romney was always the one paying least to travelling companies. In 1569-70, for example, Lord Warden's company was given 11s in Dover, 13s 4d in Rye, and 10s 8d in New Romney; Leicester's players were rewarded 13s 4d in Dover, 10s in Rye, but only 6s 8d in New Romney.<sup>48</sup> This result shows that the size of payment was decided not only by the company's connection with the locality, but also by the payment standard held by the place as well; in other words, a troupe's better reception in one place (such a Dover) than in another (such a New Romney), in many cases, was not because they had closer links with the former,<sup>49</sup> but because the former usually paid

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<sup>47</sup> For the argument that players were rewarded according to their master's status, see chapter 1.

<sup>48</sup> See 'REED, Kent' (forthcoming).

<sup>49</sup> There is no sign showing that Lord Warden's or earl of Leicester's players, or their masters, were

more to travelling players than the latter. The lower payments received by Lord Warden's players were therefore not due to the bad reception of the localities, but very possibly due to the lower payment standards generally adopted by the Cinque Port towns.

Why did the Cinque Ports adopt lower payment standards? There are two possibilities: the players were poorly treated because they were not welcome in the area; or because the financial condition of these towns was not good. In the case of the Cinque Port towns, the second explanation seems to be the more reasonable one, as the Kentish tour continued to be fairly popular among travelling companies up to the end of our period. Besides, the Kentish towns, according to Peter Clark, suffered from serious economic difficulty in the first half of the sixteenth century; a high percentage of the cloth industry emigrated to the countryside, where cheaper labour was available.<sup>50</sup> Economic circumstances not only decided the payment standard of a locality, it also affected the finance of visiting companies. Regional companies, as shown earlier, only performed in a limited area; the economic situation of the region therefore greatly influenced their fortunes. In the following section, the activity of, and payment to, regional troupes is scrutinised, showing how financial difficulty affected the business of the players.

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more closely linked with Dover or Rye than with New Romney.

<sup>50</sup> Peter Clark, 'Reformation and Radicalism in Kentish Towns,' in Wolfgang J. Mommsen *et al.* (eds.), The Urban Classes, the Nobility and the Reformation in England and Germany (Stuttgart, 1979), p.111.

## ii. The Decline of Regional Companies

The fluctuations of the regional acting trade should firstly be investigated. Regional acting players, consisting of local and regional noble performers, have 227 entries belonging to 157 troupes in our period. Graph 4 is their entry numbers in each decade.<sup>51</sup> The line representing the total entry numbers of regional companies shows that the business of this group of livery players, which progressed modestly in the first twenty years of the century, boomed in the 1520s (from 48 entries in the 1500s, 54 in the 1510s, to 91 in the 1520s). It then declined abruptly in the following two decades (56 in the 1530s, and 30 in the 1540s). The playing trade remained at the bottom in the 1550s (26 entries), and rejuvenated in the 1560s (75 entries). The revival however proved to be temporary; after the 1560s, the business dwindled again (40 in the 1570s), reached its lowest point in the 1580s (16 entries) and recovered only slightly in the last decade (28 entries) of the century.

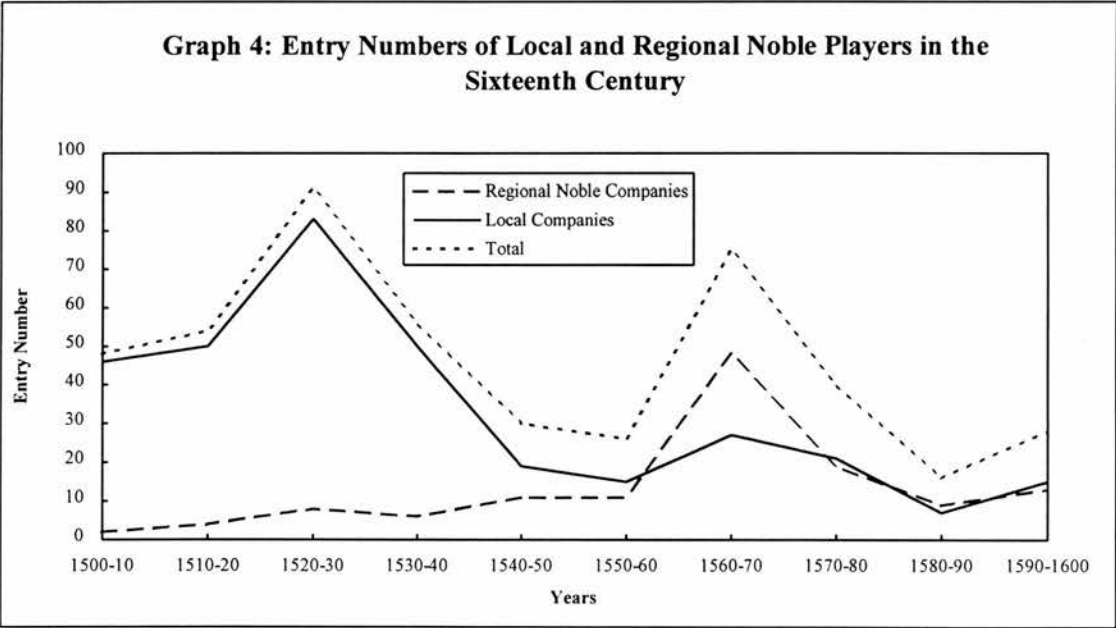
As the line reveals, the 1520s and 1560s were the two peaks for regional players. In investigating further, we found that the causes of the two booms were different: the former was mainly achieved by local players, whereas the latter by regional noble ones.<sup>52</sup> In fact, as shown in the graph, the fortunes of local and regional noble players in the sixteenth century were very different, and they should be inspected separately as a result.

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<sup>51</sup> As applied in previous graphs, the data is extended to the whole sixteenth century.

<sup>52</sup> Local players contribute 83 entries in the entire 91 of the 1520s; regional players provide 48 out of

Before the 1540s, local companies were the most significant group of regional players. Their business advanced modestly in the first two decades of the century and flourished impressively in the 1520s (46 in 1500s, 50 in 1510s, and 83 in 1520s). But after reaching its peak in the 1520s, the trade began to decline, and decline rapidly: it first returned to the level of the 1510s (50 entries) in the 1530s, then dropped to 19 entries in the 1540s, and finally to 15 entries in the 1550s. The business recovered slightly in the 1560s (27 entries), but revived only temporarily (21 in the 1570s). It fell to the bottom in the 1580s (7 entries) and recovered a little in the last decade (15 entries), but never returned to its pre-1530s standard up to the end of the century.



The story of regional noble companies was a different one. Unlike local players, this group of regional players never impresses us before the 1560s: its

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the entire 75 of the 1560s.

business developed very gently in the first half of the sixteenth century (2 in the 1500s, 4 in 1510s, 8 in 1520s, 6 in 1530s, 11 in 1540s and 1550s). Its trade boosted quite suddenly in the 1560 and the entry numbers ‘jumped’ from 11 in the previous decade to 48. The prosperity nevertheless did not last long; its entry numbers soon ‘returned’ to earlier level (19 in the 1570s), decreased to less than ten in the 1580s (9 entries), and recovered slightly in the 1590s (13 entries).

Although both being regional companies, the two groups of livery players, as discussed above, had very different experiences. The ‘golden age’ of local companies was mainly in the first half of the century, whereas that of regional noble ones in the second. Why did the two groups have such different profiles? Or, to be more specific, what caused the decline of local companies from the middle of the century, and caused the rise of regional noble troupes in the 1560s? In earlier discussion, it was argued that poor payments could have affected the survival of livery companies. Were the fortunes of these regional players linked to their revenue? This is the next question that is to be answered.

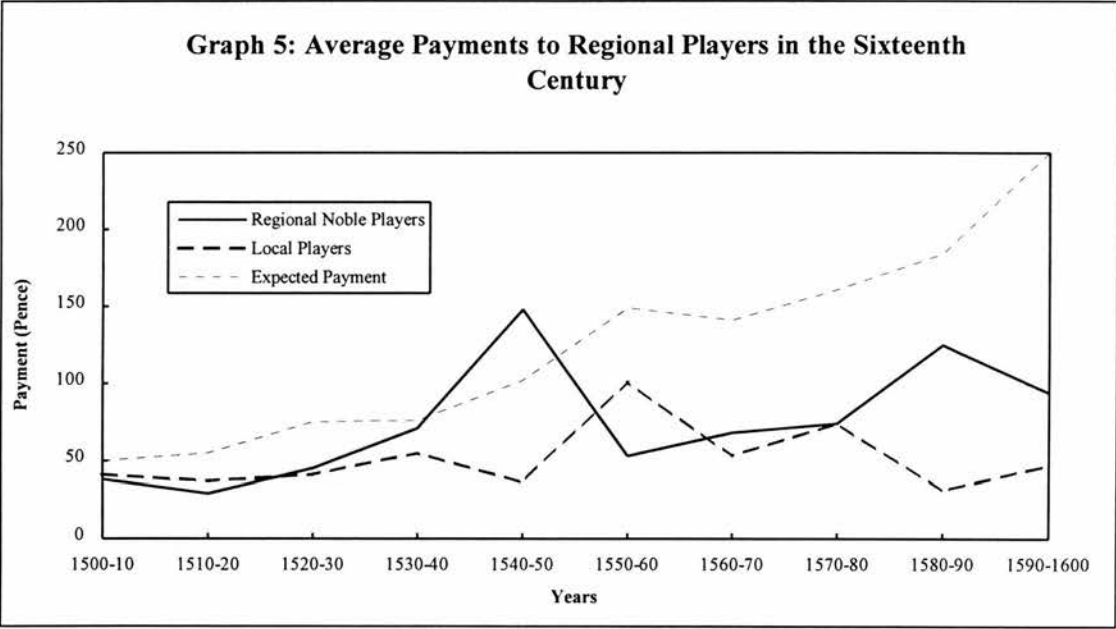
Graph 5 shows the average payments received by local and regional noble players. It indicates that apart from the 1550s (8*s* 5*d*, *i.e.* 101*d*),<sup>53</sup> rewards to local players did not fluctuate much during the century: they received 3*s* 5*d* (41*d*) in the 1500s, 3*s* 1*d* (37*d*) in the 1510s, 3*s* 5*d* (41*d*) in the 1520s, 4*s* 7*d* (55*d*) in the 1530s,

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<sup>53</sup> The exceptional high average payment was a consequence of several very generous rewards. For instance, players of Magun was rewarded 25*s* by the Clifford Household at Skipton in 1550-1; players of London 13*s* 4*d* at Plymouth in 1559-60, and players of Romeny 20*s* at Rye in 1559-60. See John



3s (36*d*) in the 1540s, 4s 5*d* (53*d*) in the 1560s, 6s 2*d* (74*d*) in the 1570s, 2s 7*d* (31*d*) in the 1580s, and 3s 11*d* (47*d*) in the 1590s. The seemingly ‘steady’ revenue of local players however was only illusory, because once inflation is considered, the ‘real’ incomes of players was in fact decreasing. The dotted light line in the graph represents the expected payment of livery players.<sup>54</sup> The graph shows that the gap between expected payment and the amount received by local players was fairly small



in the 1500s (the difference was 9*d* only). The gap increased moderately before the 1540s: 18*d* in the 1510s, 34*d* in the 1520s, and 21*d* in the 1530s. Since the 1540s, it began to grow quickly: it was 66*d* in the 1540s, 48*d* in the 1550s, 88*d* in the 1560s, 87*d* in the 1570s, 153*d* in the 1580s, and 203*d* in the 1590s. The figures show that, as time went by, the difference between the reward that local players actually received

Wasson (ed.), ‘REED, Clifford Family’, ‘REED, Kent’ (forthcoming), and REED, Devon, p.234.

<sup>54</sup> For more details of the making of this expected amount, see chapter 1, graph 2.

and the amount they should have had increased. That is, in an era of vast inflation (such as 204.7% in the 1540s, or 500% in the 1590s), the 'steady' rewards received by the local troupes were decreasing in real terms. And this falling revenue probably explains the decline of local acting troupes in the second half of the sixteenth century.

Economic factors seem to provide a less satisfactory explanation for the fluctuations of regional noble companies. The fluctuation of payments to this group of players was more drastic than that of local players.<sup>55</sup> Payments to regional noble players were fairly stable in the first three decades of the century: 38*d* in the 1500s, 29*d* in the 1510s, and 45*d* in the 1520s. They began to rise more significantly in the 1530s (71*d*), and reached an exceptional high point of 148*d* (12*s* 5*d*) in the 1540s. The payment returned to its 'normal' level in the 1550s (53*d*), increased slowly but steadily in the following three decades (68*d* in the 1560s, 74*d* in the 1570s, and 125*d* in the 1580s), and declined a little in the last ten years of the century (94*d*).

Although payments to regional noble players increased constantly, their pace apparently could not match that of inflation; the gap between the two, as in the case of local players, inevitably increased as time moved on (it was 12*d* in the 1500s, 26*d* in the 1510s, 30*d* in the 1520s, 5*d* in the 1530s, -46*d* in the 1540s,<sup>56</sup> 96*d* in the

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<sup>55</sup> The difference between the highest and lowest average payments to local player is 70*d*, while it is 119*d* for regional noble players.

<sup>56</sup> The 1540s is the only period that regional noble players received more payments than they should have expected.

1550s, 73*d* in the 1560s, 87*d* in the 1570s, 59*d* in the 1580s, and 156*d* in the 1590s). The fluctuations of payments to regional noble players however did not match those of their entry numbers: the players were best rewarded in the 1540s, but they were not particularly popular during the period (only 11 entries). They were very active in the 1560s (48 entries), but their payment in the decade was just ‘reasonable’ (68*d*, compared with the 53*d* in the previous decade and the 74*d* in the following one). It is easier to explain the disparity in the 1540s, for the high average payment of the period was the consequence of the very generous rewards given at William Francis’ Household at Ticknall Hall, Derbyshire.<sup>57</sup> In other words, payments of the 1540s were not really that impressive if we exclude the two ‘exceptional’ entries, being 54*d* on average, and this probably explains why the activity of regional noble players was just ‘normal’ during the period.

Unfortunately, no similar answer can be given for the 1560s high payment. If players’ incomes decided how active a company was, then the principle certainly is not applicable to the acting of regional noble players in the 1560s, as the payment was not particular good in the decade. In other words, the boost in the 1560s was, to a certain degree, ‘exceptional’ and can not be explained by economic factors. What, then, was the cause of this phenomenon? In comparing the entry numbers of regional noble companies to those of greater noble ones, we find that both groups enjoyed a

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<sup>57</sup> Players of John Sutton (or Dudley) were rewarded 20s, and those of Lord President 100s (for three plays) in 1540-6. See ‘REED, Derbyshire’ (forthcoming).

sudden boost in their trade in the 1560s.<sup>58</sup> This can not be a coincidence. One way of explaining the incident would be from a political perspective. As argued in chapter 1, Mary's government adopted a fairly hostile attitude towards religious polemics. In the early 1560s, the religious problem was still unsettled, but Elizabeth certainly was more friendly to religious propaganda campaigns. The 1560s therefore became a decade in which distinguished figures around the country, either regional or national, who kept their own acting companies were invited to promote their own religious ideas. And this unusual political atmosphere of the 1560s possibly was the reason for the sudden boost of the business of noble players during the period.<sup>59</sup>

Before concluding this discussion, we can review the counties from which regional players came. There are 29 localities maintaining their own players; 26 of them were English counties.<sup>60</sup> Yorkshire is the one that provided most regional companies—22 troupes came from there. Kent was in the second place, providing 21 companies. These two counties surpassed Gloucestershire, the county in the third place, impressively; the latter contained only 10 regional troupes, less than half of the leading two.<sup>61</sup> Although Kent was inferior to Yorkshire in its company numbers, it

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<sup>58</sup> For the entry number of greater noble companies in each decade, see graph 3 in chapter 2.

<sup>59</sup> For more discussion on the patronage of players for this propagandist reason, see chapter 4 and 5.

<sup>60</sup> The three exceptions are London, Wales, and Italy. London contains two companies with four records, while Wales and Italy had one troupe and one record respectively.

<sup>61</sup> The rest of the list is as follows: Devon (9), Suffolk (8), Leicestershire (7), Nottinghamshire (6), Shropshire (6), Lincolnshire (5), Dorset, Hampshire, Norfolk, Derbyshire, and Essex (4), Berkshire, Cambridgeshire, Lancashire, and Worcestershire (3), Buckinghamshire, Cornwall, Cumberland, Somerset, and Sussex (2), Westmorland, Wiltshire, and Warwickshire (1). For a complete list of the home county of all regional players, local and regional nobles, see appendix 4 and 5.

contains many more entries than the latter. The 22 regional companies from Yorkshire provide 29 entries, whereas the 21 troupes from Kent give us 120 records. In other words, although Yorkshire provides most companies, Kent was doubtless the area in which regional performance was most prosperous.

Regional companies were closely linked to the area they came from; they were part of the cultural tradition of the district. The Tudor period was a time when government tried to consolidate step by step its control over local authorities. Apart from economic difficulty, did this factor also contribute to the decline of regional acting troupes in the second half of the century? Canterbury, a town with a long festive tradition, was located in the most popular county for travelling players. It therefore provides a good example for exploring how the fluctuations of local festivities responded to the decline of civic spirit.

### **iii. Theatrical Activity at Canterbury**

Canterbury, the cathedral city in the south-east, was virtually the birthplace of English Christianity. The murder of Archbishop Thomas Becket in 1170 had made its shire a sacred place; for centuries, pilgrims strolled down the Roman Watling Street to worship the martyred saint.<sup>62</sup> Travelling along with the worshippers were the itinerant performers; its popularity among pilgrims and vicinity to London had

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<sup>62</sup> The Roman Walton Street, passing down from London, Rochester, to Canterbury, was the major road connecting the metropolis and the south-east. See Page, W. (ed.), Victoria County History, Kent, 3 vols (London, 1926), vol.1, p.11.

made the city a profitable and attractive location for travelling entertainers.<sup>63</sup>

The first Tudor livery acting troupe appeared at Canterbury in 1506-7,<sup>64</sup> but players were then minority in the travelling business. Graph 6 shows the entry numbers of livery players and minstrels at Canterbury in the sixteenth century. It is clear that at the turn of the century, minstrels were much more active in the city than players: there are 10 entries for the former and only one for the latter. Minstrels continued to overshadow players in the second decade of the century, but they soon gave way to the latter: their business declined in the 1510s to 4 entries, reaching its lowest point in the 1520s (3), slightly reviving in the following decades (4 in 1530s, 7 in 1540s, and 8 in 1550s), and ultimately disappearing from the stage for good in the 1560s.

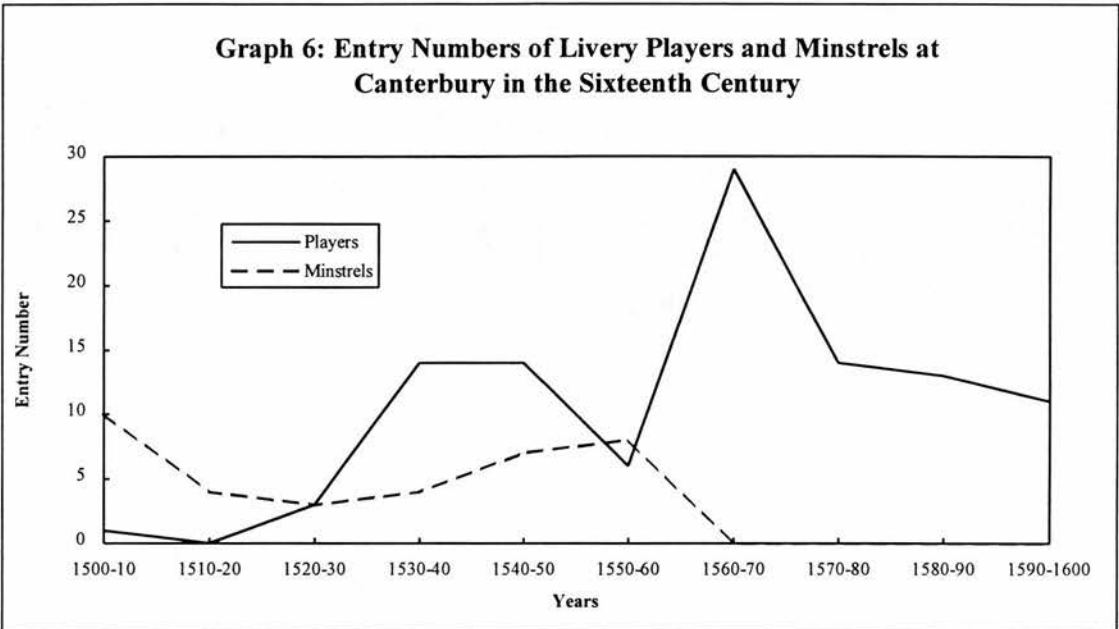
By contrast, livery players, in general, experienced expansion of their business in the sixteenth century. They began from hardly any entries in the first two decades (1 in 1500s, and 0 in 1510s), to 3 entries (the same level of minstrels). The takeoff of the trade was in the 1530s, when their entry numbers jumped to 14, exceeding that of minstrels for the first time. They sustained the same level in the following decade (14 in 1540s), and suffered a recession when their entry numbers dropped from 14 to 6. Fortunately, the business revived in the 1560s, when an unprecedented high point of

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<sup>63</sup> There are 224 entries of travelling performers at Canterbury in the sixteenth century. This figure and those used in the following discussion are all drawn from the forthcoming REED collection of Kent.

<sup>64</sup> It was king's company. This is the first time that we have record of livery players in the Tudor period.

29 entries was reached. It then returned to its former level in the last two decades of the century (14 in 1570s, 13 in 1580s, and 11 in 1590s).



Graph 6 shows that, apart from the 1550s, players always enjoyed the leading place from the 1530s.<sup>65</sup> Nevertheless, what is more important to our present concern is not the fact that players achieved impressive heights in the sixteenth century, but that they enjoyed significant success in 1530-50 and the 1560s. Why did the business of players grow in these two period? The performance of livery players was part of the cultural life of Canterbury, so in order to answer this question, we need to investigate other cultural activity in the city. St. Thomas's Watch, a religious festivity with long tradition, is our next focus.

<sup>65</sup> Players in fact occupied more than 62 percent of the entire records of post-1530 (102 out of 164).

The history of St Thomas's Watch can be traced back to the end of the fourteenth century. After being plundered by the rebels in 1381, the city decided to muster its own warriors to secure its peace; this assembling of townsmen in arms was possibly the origin of the marching watch.<sup>66</sup> There is no clear trace of the watch during the Wars of the two Roses; it was not until c.1490 that we see the revival of the old custom. An ordinance of the court of burghmote in that year declared that the Watch, which had been lost for years, was the great honour of the city. The Burghmote therefore decided to revive the tradition and held the practice on the eve of the translation of St. Thomas.<sup>67</sup> The ordinance described the contents of the march and the fines that should be levied if the requirement was failed to be fulfilled:

'...in the aforeseide Watche the Sheryfe of the seid citie to ryde in harnes, with a hanchman after him onestly emparelled, for the honour of the same citie. And the maier to ryde att his plesur, and yf the Maiers plesur be to ryde in harnes, the Aldermen to ryde in like maner; and if he ryde in his scarlet gowne, the Aldermen to ride after the seid watche in scarlet and crymesyn gownes. And yf eny Maier her after for slowthe or wilfulnesse will not observe this act, in contynewyng the seide watche with the premysses, the fortette to the commanalte x<sup>li</sup>. And yf eny Alderman by sloweth or wilfulnesse ryde not with the seide Maier, he to forfeite to the seide Commonalte xl<sup>s</sup>. Also it is enacted and agreed, that every Alderman shall fynde two cressetts, brennyng, in the seide watche, and euery one of the Comen Counsel, euery Constable, and Towne Clerk one cressett to brenne in lyke forme. And yf eny of the seid persons lacke eny cressett that nyght, he to forfeit for every cressett so lackyng iii<sup>s</sup> iv<sup>d</sup>. Whiche amerciaments to be layed owt by the seid Maier to his owne use towarde his charges susteyned in the same watche. Also the Maier for the time beyng to fynd two cressets and vi torthces, or moo att his plesure.'<sup>68</sup>

Also in that year, a drummer and a trumpeter was paid 8*d* and 20*d* respectively for their performance; a reward of 10*s* given to the waits of London for their leading the watch on Saint Thomas's night; and ten to twenty pounds of gunpowder exploded at

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<sup>66</sup> J.B. Sheppard, 'The Canterbury Marching Watch and its Pageant of St. Thomas', *Archaeologia Cantiana* 12 (1878), pp.27-9.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p.32.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.32-3.



the feast.<sup>69</sup>

In 1503-4, the pageant of St. Thomas was introduced to the procession of the watch: The pageant, which was held annually after 1504-5, encountered its first halt after the revival in 1523; apart from an annual payment of twenty shillings for the storage of the wagon in the barn of St Sepulchre's Nunnery, no other record concerning the pageant between 1523 and 1530 is known. In 1530, the pageant reappeared in the street; it was brought out, fixed, and displayed again every year until the July of 1538. From 1538, the fortune of the march and the pageant was closely linked with the progress of the Reformation in the city. In the summer of 1538, the shrine of St. Thomas was destroyed. Following this, the march named after the saint was also discarded; the pageant wagon was sold for 3s 4d in 1539. The pageant enjoyed a brief revival in 1542 and 1543, when the city conservatives struggled with the radicals for control over the city authority and the Cathedral. The wagon, however, was sold again for 11s, as a consequence of the victory of the reforming party.<sup>70</sup>

Mary's accession gave the pageant a chance of renovation. In July 1554, the watch once again marched through the streets, with morris pikes, guns and torches,

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<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.32-4. A vivid description of the atmosphere of the watch is also given by Sheppard. See, p.34.

<sup>70</sup> See 'REED, Kent' (forthcoming). The first record regarding St. Thomas pageant appears in 1504-5 in the collection. I would like to thank Dr. Gibson for allowing me to use his unpublished study of the St. Thomas's Watch, which will be in the forthcoming REED collection of Kent. Cf. *Letters & Papers, Henry VIII*, vol.13(2), no.133.

trumpeters of the Lord Wardens and of the Dover Castle leading the procession. A burghmote court degree of 4 June 1555 ordered that 'the Wacche vsed to be kept on Seynt Thomas Evyn shalbe kept and sett fourth on Seynt Thomas evyn now next comyng'. The chamberlains' account of the year hence recorded payments for the construction of a new wagon, new armour and helmets for the knights, and all the usual incidental expenses.<sup>71</sup> However, the revival of the feast, which accompanied the restoration of the old religion, proved to be momentary. When Elizabeth came to the throne, the 'Bysshop Bekkets play' was abolished once and for all: on 13 June 1559, a decree announced that the pageants would cease to be played that year, and four years later, in 1563, the wagon be sold again, followed by an ordinance on 19 May 1564 which put down the Marching for ever.<sup>72</sup>

Several factors determined the decline of the watch. The first one was the degeneration of city finance. Like other Kentish towns, Canterbury suffered from serious economic difficulty in the first half of the sixteenth century. A survey for the 1524 subsidy shows that about a thousand Canterbury inhabitants, about one quarter of the whole population, were too poor to pay the tax. Among those who did pay, two-thirds were assessed at the lowest rate. And only four per cent of the entire residents were asked to pay at the top rate.<sup>73</sup> Apart from industrial depression, the medieval trade of the city as a pilgrimage centre also declined badly long before the

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<sup>71</sup> REED, Kent (forthcoming).

<sup>72</sup> Ibid..

<sup>73</sup> Clark, 'Reformation and Radicalism in Kentish Towns,' pp.109, 111.

destruction of St Thomas's shrine. According to the Treasurers' books of the priory, as early as in the year 1472, only £8 offerings were received at the shrine and the corona, whereas in 1532 'the offerings at all the altars (excluding those made at the High Altar and at that of the Holy Cross, which were paid into a separate account), amounted to no more than £13 13s 3d.'<sup>74</sup>

The decline and the final termination of St Thomas Watch, however, represented not only the conclusion of a once-popular city festivity, but also a degeneration in civic spirit. The ordinance of the Burghmote court shows that the Watch was an occasion in which all the residents of the City should take part. Certainly, as Peter Clark points out, civic ceremony had much to do with the city's identity; it was an occasion which brought together the varied elements of the community, proclaiming the formal unity and clearly ordered hierarchy of the urban commonwealth.<sup>75</sup> Reviewing the history of Canterbury, we find that the Tudor period was one in which civic spirit slipped to its low point. The citizens, for example, were reluctant to hold civic office. A note from Canterbury in 1523 recorded: 'divers aldermen and commoners...of late have departed out of the said city and rooms [offices] to the utter undoing of the same city if remedy here be not provided.'<sup>76</sup> Participation was crucial to chartered cities, the decreasing devotion of the citizens therefore implied not only the decline of civil service, but also the decline

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<sup>74</sup> Charles E. Woodruff, 'The Financial Aspect of the Cult of St. Thomas of Canterbury', *Archaeologia Cantiana*, 44 (1932), pp.24-5.

<sup>75</sup> Clark, 'Reformation and Radicalism in Kentish Towns,' pp.111-2.

of an identification with the corporate body.

The incident best illustrating the phenomenon however was the demolishing of the city's ancient common seal. The old seal was made in 1466. On its reverse, there was a picture of St Thomas's martyrdom: the saint was kneeling, wounded by the swords of the murderers; Grim the Crossbearer extending his arm fractured by a sword-stroke; and the assassins in complete armour tardily drawing his weapon. This old seal, which had for long symbolised the pride and devotion of the citizens, was destroyed in 1541-2; it was replaced by a new one, on which only city arms were poorly engraved.<sup>77</sup>

In contrast with the decline of civic pride was the increasing influence of those authorities outside the city, especially that of the central government. This development was reflected on the visits of travelling players. Compared to city performers, those itinerant livery players were foreigners. This can be verified firstly by the composition of their patrons. Apart from the only local acting troupe, players of Hadley, there are 27 patrons whose company visited Canterbury in our period.<sup>78</sup> A survey of their background shows that only three of them whose patron had clear connection with the city, or with the county of Kent; they were the companies of Henry Neville, Sir Thomas Cheyne, and William Brooke. The Nevilles were an

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., pp.109-110.

<sup>77</sup> Historical Manuscripts Commission, 9th Report (1883), p.153.

<sup>78</sup> Players of Hadley (probably of Kent) was paid 20*d* on 10 September 1537-8. See 'REED, Kent'

ancient family whose principal residence was in Kent;<sup>79</sup> whereas Cheyne and Brooke, as shown earlier, were succeeding Lord Wardens of the Cinque Ports. Although these three patrons kept certain connection with the locality, they were in essence servants of the monarch: they did not behave according to the interest of the locality. In other words, the survey of the patrons reveals that these masters and accordingly their companies were not part of the local community. Most of them did not have any direct connection with the region, and for those few who did, they did not establish their influence on local support and therefore did not have regional welfare as their first priority.

This 'foreign' feature of itinerant players can be further illustrated by the occasions on which they visited the city. Among the entire 105 entries of livery players at Canterbury, 19 of them recorded the date of the payment;<sup>80</sup> they were January (11, 16, 28, 31), February (2),<sup>81</sup> March (2, 17, 27, 30), May (5), June (10), August (10, 20), September (21, 27), November (1), and December (3, 5, 7). From the records we can see that none of these dates fell into the duration of the three most

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(forthcoming).

<sup>79</sup> The Nevilles also in charge of the Stafford estates in West Kent, for George Neville, fifth lord Abergavenny, married the daughter of Buckingham. See Clark, English Provincial Society from the Reformation to the Revolution: Religion, Politics and Society in Kent 1500-1640 (Hassocks, 1977), pp.6-7, 14.

<sup>80</sup> As the records we have are basically from city chamberlains' account, it is more likely for the official to note down the days of payments than that of performances. However, as players were supposed to stay at one place for but a short period of time (as they needed to touring around to earn a living), it is reasonable to assume that the performing times are not very far from the times of payments.

<sup>81</sup> February 2 was Candlemas.

important feasts of the city;<sup>82</sup> in other words, there is no clear clue indicating the possible connection between the visits of players and the city's festivity. If we may suppose that the festive atmosphere made the occasions profitable for performers, then the disappearance of any record recording the visit of livery players during the period is certainly extraordinary. What can be the reason for the absence of itinerant players in the city's festivities? As I have argued earlier, this was possibly because itinerant players were identified by the inhabitants as 'foreigners', who therefore should be excluded from these very 'local' celebrations.<sup>83</sup>

The discussion above had made it clear that in contrast with the St Thomas Watch of Canterbury, travelling players were foreign entertainers: their patrons did not establish their status in the city, and the visiting time of the troupe did not fit especially well into that of local festivities. In that case, what can the development of these two contrasted performances tell us? A comparison of their stories under the Tudors will help to clear up the matter. As mentioned above, the first St Thomas Process celebrated at Canterbury in the Tudor period was in the year 1504-5. Hereafter, the festivity was held annually until the year 1523. After a six-year cessation, the watch was revived in 1530, and lasted for eight years. No pageant of the saint was prepared except during a brief revival in 1543. Between the years 1554 and 1558, the process enjoyed a short revival under Queen Mary, but after

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<sup>82</sup> They are July 7, September 29, and December 29. For more details, see the discussion in the earlier part of the essay. The only clear connection that we could be sure is that the waits of London came to Canterbury leading the process of St Thomas for several years.

<sup>83</sup> For more detailed discussion, see chapter 1.

Elizabeth's accession, the feast was gone for good.

How about the performance of livery players? As there is only one record of a local acting troupe, I shall leave it alone, and pay attention to those sponsored by royal and noble patrons. From the records we can see that royal companies visited Canterbury fairly consistently; they performed at the city almost every year from 1527 to 1548. Edward's and Mary's reigns seem to be the ebb of the company's relationship with the city; only in 1550-1 were the King's players rewarded 10s at the city. The royal troupe enjoyed rejuvenated interest in the city after Elizabeth's accession. Between 1558 and 1571, they were there six times, and after the establishment of Queen's Men in 1583, the company visited the city almost every year until 1597.

Compared to the fairly regular appearance of royal players, the visits of noble players were less consistent, but more revealing. The years that contain records of noble players before the last process in 1558 are 1537, 1538, 1542, 1543, 1547, 1548, 1549, 1550, and 1557. If we compare these years with the development of St Thomas's Watch, we find that the performing times of the two were almost incompatible: only four in the total thirty-five years of St Thomas process contain records of noble players; the process went into history in 1558, and it was in this period that the number of noble companies visiting the city began to rise, reaching its highest point in the 1560s.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> The visible decline of the number of travelling players in the 1580s (from 13 to 6) might be a result

Less information is conveyed by the visits of royal players. Their constant appearance in the city probably reflected what David Loades remarks 'the special attention that the Crown had long given to the region'.<sup>85</sup> Their intense visits to the city from the mid-Henrician period probably show the King's determination to secure the loyalty of this cathedral city, to ensure the success of his religious policies.<sup>86</sup> The message given by noble players however is very different from that of the royal ones. The fluctuations of the business of noble players at Canterbury very much reflected the changing power relationship between the local and exterior authorities. The almost incompatible appearance of St Thomas's Watch and of noble players confirms our earlier conclusion that the activities of the city's march and of itinerant players were exclusive to each other. St Thomas's process was not merely a religious feast; it was a civic ritual as well. The termination of St. Thomas worship, the destruction of the ancient common seal, and the cessation of the procession therefore represented the decline of both the catholic faith and the pride and city identity once harboured by the citizens. In other words, the eventual disappearance of the process in 1558 and the prosperity of the business of livery players in the 1560s, to a certain degree, show the ascendancy of external authorities over the local ones. And these external authorities, as argued earlier, were mostly subordinate to the Crown. The changed

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of the increasing puritan influence in the city in the later phase of Elizabeth's reign (Sabbath-breaking was for the first time made a penal offence in 1554-5, an innovation more characteristic of the Puritan times of Elizabeth than of the Catholic of Mary). See, HMC, 9th report, p.155.

<sup>85</sup> David M. Loades, Two Tudor Conspiracies (Cambridge, 1965).

<sup>86</sup> More about the functions of livery players during the reformation, see chapters 4 and 5.



fortunes of St Thomas's Watch and of livery players under the Tudors therefore expose not only the different stories of two businesses, but also, probably more importantly, the increasing control of the monarch and the central government over the city. The termination of the local festivity and the rising of foreign entertainment were merely one of the cultural consequences of the centralisation policy of the Tudor regime.

#### **iv. Conclusion**

It has been demonstrated in this chapter that compared to greater companies, regional players were much more linked to and also confined to their home region. They seldom ventured to unfamiliar areas, and, as shown in the case of Lord Warden's players, were likely to be better paid in localities with which they had connections. The fortunes of the two groups of regional acting companies in the sixteenth century are also disclosed in this chapter. Companies named by their home town declined rapidly after reaching their apex in the 1520s. One major cause for the decay was the 'debased' rewards they received; as time move on, the gap between their real payments and the amount they should have received grew. Living with ever 'decreasing' incomes, these players were forced to withdraw gradually from the stage from the mid-sixteenth century. The retirement of local companies was not an isolated phenomenon. As these players were closely linked to their home region, their decline in fact reflected the degradation of regional economy and identity, which were consequences of the Tudor centralisation policy.

Regional troupes called by their patron's name, which usually played only minor roles in regional performing business, experienced an exceptional success in the 1560s. Their payment in the decade shows that economic factors were not the cause of the achievement. The fluctuating fortune of St Thomas's Watch in Canterbury also shows that the economy was not the only factor which determined the fate of civic ceremony. In both cases, political and religious factors decided the development. As Graham Meyhew in his study of Tudor Rye points out, 'a highly-developed and complex ritual cycle of religious events' once enjoyed by the town on the eve of the Reformation was swept away by the religious movement.<sup>87</sup> The Reformation initiated in the 1530s had a profound influence on the cultural life of the country. Not only were many regional religious celebrations destroyed, but a certain form of propagandist tool, livery players, was purposely applied to promote the government's policy. In chapter 1, we argued that from the 1530s many scripts written contained explicit propagandist information. In the following chapter, further investigation of the polemical troupes will be given.

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<sup>87</sup> Mayhew, Tudor Rye (Falmer, 1987), p.55. For more about the influence of Reformation on the cultural life of Rye, see also pp.55-60.

## Chapter 4: Propagandist Acting Companies (1)

Contemporaries were well aware of the propaganda campaigns carried by livery acting companies. On 21 May 1547, Bishop Stephen Gardiner wrote to Protector Somerset complaining about some players' attempt to beguile people's judgement:

'Certain printers, players, and preachers, make a wonderment, as though we knew not yet how to be justified, nor what sacraments we should have. And if the agreement in religion made in the time of our late sovereign lord be of no force in their judgment, what establishment could any new agreement have? and every uncertainty is noisome to any realm. And where every man will be master, there must needs be uncertainty.'<sup>1</sup>

John Christopherson also expressed similar concern in Mary's reign.<sup>2</sup> In his Exhortation to all menne to take hede and beware of rebellion, he voiced his deep concern of the potential damage that could be caused by travelling players. He emphasised the role played by singers and actors in spreading Protestant doctrines:

'At which tyme also y<sup>e</sup> deuill, for y<sup>e</sup> better furtheraunce of heresy, picked out two sorts of people, that shuld in tauernes and innes, at comen tables, and in open streets set forwarde his purpose, as wel as false preachers dyd in the pulpet: that is to say, minstrels and players of enterludes. The one to singe pestilente and abhominable songes, and the other to set forth openly before mens eyes the wicked blasphemye, that they had cōtried for the defacing of all rites, ceremonies, and all the whole order, used in the administration of the beissed Sacramentes.'<sup>3</sup>

This vigorous argument of Christopherson was written in 1554, after the suppression

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<sup>1</sup> John Foxe, The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe, (ed.) Stephen Reed Cattley, 8 vols. (London, 1838), vol.6, p.31.

<sup>2</sup> Christopherson was an ardent Roman Catholic. He was one of the original members of the foundation of the Trinity College, Cambridge. During the reign of Edward VI, he retired to the Continent. He returned to England and was appointed Master of Trinity in place of Dr William Bill, on Mary's accession. He was later promoted from the deanery of Norwich to the bishopric of Chichester. But soon after Elizabeth came to the throne, he was arrested for his sermon preached at Paul's Cross. He was thrown into prison, where he soon died. See Frederick S. Boas, University Drama in the Tudor Age (Oxford, 1914), pp.44-5.

<sup>3</sup> John Christopherson, An Exhortation to All Menne to Take Hede and Beware of Rebellion (London, 1554; reprinted Amsterdam, 1973), T3.

of Wyatt's rising and his purpose was to demonstrate to the Queen the general causes of it. Players, along with minstrels, were believed by Christopherson to be instrumental in the propagation of 'naughty' and 'seditious' messages.

Mary's government adopted a more hostile attitude towards the acting companies who carried slanderous messages.<sup>4</sup> The religious campaign carried by players was rekindled when Elizabeth came to the throne. As early as in 1559, John de Feckenham, abbot of Westminster, made an oration in the Parliament pointing out that

'The subiectes of this realme, and in speciall the nobilities and suche as were of her honorable Cownsell, did in Quene Marye's dayes knowe the caulynge for helpe and grace by humble prayers and serving of God. And now, synce the commynge and raigne of our most soveraigne and deare ladie Quene Elizabeth, by the onelye preachers and scaffold players of this new religion, all thinges are chaunged and turned upsidowne, notwithstanding the Quene's Highnes' most godlye proclamacions made to the contrarie...'<sup>5</sup>

Feckenham's opinion was further endorsed by Thomas Dorman, who clearly demonstrated his dissatisfaction with the role of players and minstrels as 'chief ministres in publishing the nevve ghospell.' In A Provfe of Certeyne Articles, published in 1564, he noted:

'I passe over here in silence the infamouse companie of common minstrelles and entrelude plaiers, who be all brothers of youre fraternitis, membres of your corporation, and in so good credite emongest yow, that they haue their charge of dispensing the worde as well as yow. So farre furth, that in youre filthy and dirty donghill of stincking martyrs, yow call players one of the engines set up by god against the triple crowne of the pope to bring him downe.'<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> See, for instance, the prosecution of Sir Francis Leek's players discussed in chapter 1.

<sup>5</sup> '[House of Lords] Abbot Feckenham's speech on the uniformity bill, 27/28 April(?)' in T.E. Hartley (ed.), Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I, vol.1.1558-1581 (Leicester, 1981), p.31.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas Dorman, A Provfe of Certeyne Articles in Religion, Denied by M. Ivell, sett furth in defence of the Catholyke beleef therein (1564; reprinted London, 1976), fol.123b.

The concern of mid-Tudor figures such as Gardiner or Christopherson was not groundless. As demonstrated in chapter 1 of this thesis, from the late 1520s to the mid-1570s, polemical drama prospered in England.<sup>7</sup> In fact, if we make a survey of the religious inclination of patrons of livery companies, we find that many of them did harbour specific religious attachments. Anne Boleyn was Henry's Protestant queen, whereas Edward Seymour, Lord Protector, was Edward's executive for promoting the new religion. But apart from those in the power centre, many less influential figures also held their own religious views. William Brooke, Lord Cobham, for example, is believed to be pro-Protestant. Ambrose Dudley, earl of Warwick and son-in-law of Francis Russell, the protestant earl of Bedford, was likely to be a sympathiser of the new faith. Edward Parker, son of the twelfth Lord Morley, was a Protestant. And John de Vere, sixteenth earl of Oxford, was the first Protestant master of the family.

Patrons with religious attachment of course were not confined to the Protestant camp only; many noblemen, especially those from ancient origin, were supporters of the old faith. William Somerset, third earl of Worcester and brother-in-law of Thomas Percy, seventh earl of Northumberland, was a Roman Catholic. Sir Thomas Cheney, who once disputed with Archbishop Cranmer out of religious difference, was conservative in his faith. And Henry Fitz Alan, twelfth earl of Arundel, who married his daughter Mary to Thomas Howard, fourth duke of Norfolk, was the leader of the old nobility and the catholic party in the court.

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<sup>7</sup> See chapter 1 and appendix 3. Cf. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, 4 vols. (Oxford, 1923), vol.1, chapter 8; and Sydney Anglo, *Spectacle, Pageantry, and Early Tudor Policy* (Oxford, 1969), chapter 7.

E.K. Chambers in his The Elizabethan Stage points out that early English reformers had engaged drama as a powerful weapon of religious propaganda, and this close alliance between the pulpit and the stage continued into the opening years of Elizabeth's reign, though ceased shortly thereafter.<sup>8</sup> Paul W. White argues that players, who in medieval times were employed mainly to entertain and enhance the magnificence of the courts which retained them, increasingly 'carried out a propagandist function of advancing their patrons' ideological interests' during the Tudor period.<sup>9</sup> Chapter 1 of this thesis demonstrates that amid a serious setback during the 1550s, the acting business reached two zeniths in the 1530s and 1560s respectively.<sup>10</sup>

The fluctuations of the playing profession, to a large extent, reflected contemporary circumstances. The 1530s was the commencing era of the Reformation, when propaganda was purposely applied to promote the religious movement. This propagandist campaign, which continued to operate under Edward's reign, was faced with severe suppression by Mary's government. The campaign revived soon after Elizabeth's succession to the Tudor throne. The 1560s was the first decade of the young queen's reign. In this period, although religion continued to be a major concern of the time, other issues, such as royal marriage and succession, loomed large.

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<sup>8</sup> Chambers, ES, vol.1, pp.241-2.

<sup>9</sup> Paul W. White, Theatre and Reformation: Protestantism, Patronage, and Playing in Tudor England (Cambridge, 1993), p.12. Many other scholars also carry the same opinion. See, for instance, Suzanne Westfall, Patrons and Performance: Early Tudor Household Revels (Oxford, 1990), and Ian Lancashire's 'Introduction' in Two Tudor Interludes: 'The Interlude of Youth', 'Hick Scorer' (Manchester, 1980).

<sup>10</sup> See chapter 1 and graph 1.

Acting companies, as shown in contemporary arguments, played a crucial role in the competition of persuasion. If taking Mary's reign as a watershed, 1530 to 1553 was the first phase of the propagandist campaign and Elizabeth's time the second. The way in which the propagandist mission was operated by the players is the major concern of this and the next chapter. This chapter will scrutinise the first phase of the campaign. Although many patrons of players are believed to have employed their livery companies to promote their religious causes, most of them have not left behind sufficient material for further investigation. Thomas Cromwell, Henry VIII's minister behind the Reformation, was the initiator of the religious propaganda; his role in the campaign has been widely recognised, but not enough attention has been paid to his employment of drama and players. Apart from Cromwell, Katherine Willoughby, duchess of Suffolk, was one of the few patrons whose endeavour to promote the new religion is well known. As a ardent Protestant and female patron, her patronage, to a significant extent, represents the practice generally applied of the time. Cromwell and Willoughby are the focus of our following discussion

### **i. Thomas Cromwell and His Patronage of Livery Players**

Thomas Cromwell was the man behind Henry's religious propaganda campaign. A letter written in 1537 by one Thomas Wylley, vicar of Yoxford, to Cromwell seeking his patronage well illustrates the minister's practice. In the letter, Wylley reported to the minister that he had dedicated a work to him:

'I dedicate and offer to your Lordship a reverent receiving of the Sacrament as a Lenten matter declared by six children representing Christ, the Worde of God, Paul, Austyn, a child, a nun called Ignoransy, as a secret thing, that shall have his end once rehersed afore your eye by the said children.'



He then described the difficult situation he had been put into after his composition of an anti-papal play:

‘The most part of the priests of Suffolk will not receive me into their churches to preach, but have disdained me ever since I made a play against the Pope’s counselors, Error, Colle Clogger of Conscience, and Incredulity, that and the Act of Parliament had not followed after, I had been counted a great liar.’

Wylley also related that, despite the difficulty, he was still working on new plays:

‘I have made a play called a Rude Commonalty. I am amaking of another called the Woman on the Rock, in the fire of faith affyning and a purging in the true purgatory, never to be seen but of your Lordship’s eye.’

The vicar seems to have been desperate, for he concluded the letter with an urgent appeal: ‘Aid me, for Christ’s sake, that I may preach Christ.’ And signed at the end as Thomas Wylley, the ‘fatherless and forsaken.’<sup>11</sup>

John Foxe described Cromwell as a man ‘seeking all means and ways to beat down false religion and advance the true.’<sup>12</sup> Wylley’s letter shows that it was widely known to the contemporaries that the minister offered patronage to promote his religious policy; anti-papal works, including plays, were favoured, if not openly encouraged, by him. Unfortunately, nothing more is heard about the vicar, which implies that he probably failed to gain the attention of the great patron. Wylley’s failure however does not question the minister’s position as an important patron of literary men. John Foxe described Cromwell’s circle:

‘...[Cromwell] always retained unto him and had about him such as could be found helpers and furtherers of the same; in the number of whom were sundry and divers

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<sup>11</sup> J. S. Brewer, J. Gairdner, and R.H. Brodie (eds.), Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII, 21 vols. and addenda (London, 1862-1932), vol.12(1), no.529.

<sup>12</sup> Foxe, Acts and Monuments, vol.5, p.403. Cf. B.W. Beckingsale, Thomas Cromwell, Tudor minister (London, 1978), p.127. For more of the means used by Cromwell to promote the reformation, see also pp.126-30.



fresh and quick wits, pertaining to his family; by whose industry and ingenious labours divers excellent both ballads and books were contrived and set abroad, concerning the suppression of the pope and all popish idolatry.’<sup>13</sup>

John N. King also remarks that literary patronage was another weapon successfully employed by Cromwell. William Gray of Reading composed anti-papal ballads for his patron; Thomas Starkey and Richard Morison wrote pamphlets in defence of the royal supremacy; Richard Taverner’s translations converted Erasmus into an advocate of Protestant moderation; and Holbein made a woodcut, which later became the title page of Great Bible (1539), symbolising the royal supremacy and the conservatism of crown policy.<sup>14</sup> B.W. Beckingsale also argues that Cromwell’s methods of propaganda ranged from ‘the destruction of shrines and the ruin of great religious houses to the toleration, if not the active encouragement of anticlerical plays and interludes.’<sup>15</sup>

To understand Cromwell’s application of dramatic propaganda, it is necessary to discuss first the arguments of one of Cromwell’s most important agents, Sir Richard Morison. Morison’s career as a propagandist, 1536-9, covered the most important era of Cromwell’s campaign. He was responsible for defending the royal divorce and supremacy, the literary offensive against the rebels during the Pilgrimage of Grace, the campaign against Cardinal Pole, and the encouragement of patriotic enthusiasm during the threat of French invasion.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> John Foxe, *ibid.*, vol.5, p.403. Cf. John N. King, English Reformation Literature: The Tudor Origins of the Protestant Tradition (Princeton, 1982), pp.48-9.

<sup>14</sup> King, *ibid.*, pp.49, 53. The Great Bible of 1539 was printed by Richard Grafton and Edward Whitchurch, who were under the patronage of Cromwell. To see the woodcut of Holbein, see figure 3 in King’s book.

<sup>15</sup> Beckingsale, Thomas Cromwell, p.127.

<sup>16</sup> Anglo, Spectacle, Pageantry, and Early Tudor Policy, p.266. For more of Morison’s career, see

In a short treatise entitled 'A discourse touching the reformation of the lawes of England',<sup>17</sup> Morison suggested that Henry VIII should apply various means, including drama, to denounce the vice of the Bishop of Rome, and also remind the English people the good fortune they had of being liberated by their judicious king from the bondage of the papacy. In the pamphlet, Morison first pointed out the methods applied by the Papacy to try to prevent this from happening.

'Expedient and veraie necessary it is, that unto the tyme he be destroyed of all prynces, bannershede oute of all christendom, the ungodlynes, hurtes, and evylls that have come and maye come through hym to everye christian realme were daily by all means opened inculked and dryven into the peoples heddes, taught in scoles to children, plaied in playes before the ignoraunt people, songe in mynstrelles songes, and bokes in englishe purposley to be dyvysed to declare the same at large.'<sup>18</sup>

He then mentioned that rulers should apply all possible means, such as drama, to convey all necessary knowledge to their subjects. This knowledge should not be confined to the positive aspect of the Reformation; anti-papal material should be included as well to remind people of the misery they had endured under the Pope's thrall:

'...rulers somtyme do and muste wynke at the small faultes of such ther subiectes as be indued with excellent vertues, bycause they will not lose the use, commodyte and benyfitte of thother. Playes, songes and books are to be born withal, thowghe they payne and vexe some, specyally whan they declare eyther the abhominacion of the bisshop of rome and his adherentes, or the benefittes browght to thys realme by your graces tornyng hym and hys out of it, they are to be borne with all, thowghe

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W.G. Zeevald, Foundations of Tudor Policy (Cambridge, Mass., 1948).

<sup>17</sup> The original manuscript is preserved at the British Library (Cotton, MS. Faustina. C. ii, fols. 5-22). Sydney Anglo has transcribed part of the manuscript (fols. 15b-18b). Argument here is based on Anglo's transcription. See Sydney Anglo, 'An Early Tudor Programme for Plays and Other Demonstrations against the Pope,' Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes, 20 (1957), pp.177-9.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., pp.177-8.

som thyng in them be to be misliked...'<sup>19</sup>

Morrison then attacked some 'dangerous' aspects of folk culture, such as the Robin Hood legend, in which the disobedience of the people was approved:

'In somer comenly upon the holy daies in most places of your realm, ther be playes of Robyn hoode, mayde Marian, freer Tuck, wherin besides the lewdenes and rebawdray that ther is opened to the people, disobedience also to your officers, is taught, whilst these good bloodes go about to take from the shiref of Notyngnam one that for offendyng the lawes shulde have suffered execution.'<sup>20</sup>

Morison therefore suggested that, in place of those processions, bonfires, and prayers venerating the Pope and folklore encouraging boisterous actions, plays disparaging Rome and advancing the Reformation cause should be purposely promoted:

'Howmoche better is it that those plaies shulde be forbodden and deleted and others dyvysed to set forthe and declare lyvely before the peoples eies the abhomyntation and wickednes of the bisshop of Rome, monkes, ffreers, nonnes, and suche like, and to declare and open to them thobedience that your subiectes by goddes and mans lawes owe unto your magestie.'<sup>21</sup>

Morison concluded with the advantage of drama as a means in the propagation:

'Into the comen people thynges sooner enter by the eies, then by the eares: remembryng more better that they see then that they heere: thus spekyng of the evyll that commethe of ignoraunce and of the goode that commethe of knowlage, I have somewhat gon from my chief matier: But I nowe retyre to it.'<sup>22</sup>

As Sydney Anglo points out, Morison's statement was 'intended for the enlightenment of Henry VIII.'<sup>23</sup> He emphasised the importance of visual presentations in forming public opinion, and argued that negative propaganda, such

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p.178.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p.179.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p.176.

as denouncing the Pope, was as important as the presentation of the Reformation in a position height. Morison's treatise was calendared in the collection of papers for Henry VIII's reign for 1542.<sup>24</sup> Anglo however believes that the original date of composition could well have been some four, or more, years earlier, as Morison's anti-papal suggestions had been put into practice long before 1542.<sup>25</sup> G.R. Elton also held a similar opinion, suggesting the treatise was written in about 1535/1536.<sup>26</sup>

What was the effect of Morison's suggestion? Elton states that although Morrison was right, the pre-Elizabethan stage was not littered with anti-papal plays commissioned by Cromwell.<sup>27</sup> Elton's comment is true in that no official action can be attributed directly to Morison's pamphlet, but his opinions certainly did not come to nothing. On 30 June 1535, Eustace Chapuys, the Spanish ambassador, reported an anti-papal play, which was 'a gallant and notable interpretation of a chapter of the Apocalypse', performed on the eve of St. John's. To see the play, Chapuys described,

'The King went thirty miles from here [London], walked 10 miles at 2 o'clock at night with a two-handed sword, and got into a house where he could see everything.'

The play was about the King decapitating papal clerics, and Henry was so pleased that he not only revealed himself, but also proposed that it should be repeated on the eve of St. Peter's.

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<sup>24</sup> See L&P, Henry VIII, vol.17, appendix 2, p.707.

<sup>25</sup> Anglo, 'An Early Tudor Programme', p.177. Cf. Elton, 'Reform by Statute: Thomas Starkey's *Dialogue* and Thomas Cromwell's Policy', in Proceedings of the British Academy, 54 (1968), p.178.

<sup>26</sup> Anglo, *ibid.*; Elton, Policy and Police: the enforcement of the Reformation in the age of Thomas Cromwell (London, 1972), p.185, and 'Reform by Statute', pp.177-8.

<sup>27</sup> Elton, Policy and Police, pp.185-6.

‘He [the King] was so pleased at seeing himself cutting off the heads of the clergy, that in order to laugh at his ease, and encourage the people, he discovered himself. He sent to tell his lady that she ought to see the representation of it repeated on the eve of St. Peter.’<sup>28</sup>

Nor was Morison’s proposal to the king was an isolated incident. In 1543, an act clearly demonstrated that

‘...it shalbe lawfull to all and everye persone and persones, to sette foorth songes, plaies and enterludes, to be used and exercysed within this Realme and other the kinges Domynions, for the rebuking and reproching of vices and the setting foorth of vertue.’

For ‘the advancement of true religion and for the abolishment of the contrary’, polemical players were encouraged, providing they ‘meddle[d] not with the interpretations of Scripture, contrarye to the doctryne set foorth or to be sett foorth by the Kinges Majestie’.<sup>29</sup>

Apart from Morison, the minister also employed various writers, including John Rastell and Thomas Starkey, to provide the same service.<sup>30</sup> Amongst those men of letters patronised by Cromwell, polemical playwrights played a significant role, and the famous dramatist John Bale was the most important among them. To illustrate Bale’s connection with Cromwell, we shall first go to the minister’s household accounts. According to the accounts between 1537 and 1539, there were at least fifteen livery companies, including nine acting troupes, performing in the household.

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<sup>28</sup> Letters and Papers, Vol.8, no.949. Cf. White, Theatre and Reformation, p.28.

<sup>29</sup> Norman Sanders, Richard Southern, T.W. Craik, and Lois Potter (eds.), The Revels History of Drama in English, vol.II: 1500-1576 (London, 1980), p.25. The decree was in A. Luders, Sir T. Edlyn Tomlins, J. France, W. E. Taunton, and J. Raithby (eds.), Statutes of the Realm...from Original Records, 12 vols. (London, 1810-28), vol.3, p.894.

<sup>30</sup> Anglo, ‘An Early Tudor Programme’, p.177.

'...February...8th. Earl of Rutland's minstrels, 7s 6d...the Queen's players, 20s...June...10th...Lady Elizabeth's minstrels, 6s 8d...December.. 26th. The King's players, 22s 6d...the lord chancellor's players, 20s...January [1538]...21st...Lord Warden's players, 20s. 22nd. Duke of Suffolk's players, 20s...23rd, Lord Chancellor's players, 10s....February...4th...lord Cobham's players, 20s...April...12th...Mr Hopton's priest, for playing before my Lord with his children, 22s 6d...June...30th...the King's minstrels, by Mr. Richard, 7s. 6d...September...8th...Balle and his fellows at St. Stephen's besides Canterbury, for playing before my Lord, 40s...15th. Lord Admiral's minstrels, 7s. 6d...December...29th...the waits of London, 20s...January, 30 Hen. VIII [1539]...11th. The Prince's minstrels, 10s...31st, Bale and his fellows for playing before my Lord, 30s...' <sup>31</sup>

Amongst these travelling companies, John Bale's troupe was the one which enjoyed special favour: it not only performed twice in the household, but also received extraordinary rewards. In 1538, 'Bale and his fellows' earned 40s for their performance at St Stephen's Church, an amount much higher than the average gratuity, 20s, received by the peer's troupes.<sup>32</sup> Whereas in 1539, they were paid 30s, three times the amount given to the Prince's minstrels. As demonstrated earlier, the size of rewards reflected the relationship between the company and the payer, the very generous payments received by Bale's players therefore indicate that the troupe had a special connection with the minister. In fact, many evidences show that Bale was under the patronage of Cromwell, and that his players were responsible for the minister's propagandist campaign. To illustrate Bale's service to Cromwell in more detail, the playwright's career must first be scrutinised.

In accessing Bale's life and polemical works, Stephen Gardiner's letter is a good introduction. Several passages in Gardiner's letter to Somerset display the

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<sup>31</sup> L&P, Henry VIII, vol.14(2), no.782, pp.329-30, 333-7, 339.

<sup>32</sup> For the importance of St. Stephen's Church as a revue, see White, Theatre and Reformation, pp.149-62.

Bishop's displeasure at Bale's works.<sup>33</sup> He complained:

'... I have of late two books set forth in English by Bale, very pernicious, seditious, and slanderous...For it grieveth me not a little to see, so soon after my late sovereign lord and master's death, a book spread abroad more to his dishonour...than professed enemies have imagines, to note a woman to have suffered under him as a martyr; and the woman therewith to be, by Bale's own elucidation (as he calleth it) so set forth and painted as she appeareth to be, and is boasted to be a sacramentary, and by the laws worthy (as she suffered) the pains of death; such like things have, by stealth, In our late sovereign lord's days, gone abroad as they do now....'<sup>34</sup>

Gardiner's letter reveals the controversial essence of Bale's writings. Bale (1495-1563), born in Suffolk of humble origin, was probably the most controversial writer of the time. Educated in Cambridge and trained as a Carmelite monk, he denounced his old vows and took one Dorothy to his wife.<sup>35</sup>

It is difficult to say when Bale started his interest in drama. Peter Happé suggests that he might have witnessed plays when he was at the Carmelite House, and this love for the genre further developed during his years in Cambridge.<sup>36</sup> Blatt argues that Bale probably began to write drama as early as 1534, with the encouragement and perhaps under the protection of John Vere, the earl of Oxford.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> These passages are in the same letter that Gardiner wrote to Somerset in 1537. See above.

<sup>34</sup> Foxe, Acts and Monuments, vol.6, p.30.

<sup>35</sup> John Bale, 'Autobiography', translated by Peter Happé in his The Complete Plays of John Bale, 2 vols (Cambridge, 1985-6), appendix II, p.147. For more of Bale's life, see *ibid.*, appendix II. Thora Balslev Blatt, The Plays of John Bale: A Study of Ideas, Technique and Style (Copenhagen, 1968), 'Introduction'. And Peter Happé and John N. King (eds.), The Vocacyon of Johan Bale to the Bishoprick of Ossorie in Ireland (Wesel, 1553, reprinted, New York, 1990).

<sup>36</sup> Happé, The Complete Plays of John Bale, vol.1, pp.2, 3. East Anglia was a region with prosperous theatrical activities at the beginning of the sixteenth century. A.H. Nelson has indicated interest in drama at the Carmelite House in Ipswich in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. See Nelson, The Medieval English Stage (London, 1974), pp.215-7.

<sup>37</sup> Blatt, The Plays of John Bale, p.29.



Nevertheless, it is clear that Bale's interest in drama spans about thirty years and during this period of time, he composed 24 plays, most of them were written in the 1530s.<sup>38</sup>

As an eminent propagandist and playwright, Bale was conscious of the power of drama and of itinerant players as an instrument to promote opinions. In his The Epistel Exhortatorye of an Inglyshe Christian (1544), Bale revealed his ideas about the potential of the stage. He first censured the religious drama of the Roman Catholic Church, and then demonstrated that the proper application of the art was to serve the new learning.

'None leaue ye vnuexed and vntroble/ No, not so much as the poore minstrel and players of interludes, but ye are doing with them. So long as they played lyes and songe baudy songes/ blaspheme God and corrupting mens consciences, ye neuer blamed them, but were verye well contented. But sens they persuaded the people to worship theyr Lord God a ryght accordyng to hys holie lawes and not yours, and to acknowledge Jesus Chryst for their onlye redemer and sauour, without your lowsie legerdemains, ye neuer were pleased with them/ when they tell you as the truth is, that your Romysh father hathe played the cruell Antychryste, and you his false physicions in holdyng the Christen multitude so many hundredth yeres in such damnable darknes of sprite without repentaunce/ ye take it vnpatientlye sekynge their destruccion for it.'<sup>39</sup>

In the latter part of the pamphlet, Bale also equated players and singers with writers and preachers in the promotion of the new religion, which caused the fury and fear of the papists:

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<sup>38</sup> As a propagandist writer, Bale certainly did not disappoint his patron; he, as John N. King remarks, was the most active English Protestant author to survive Cromwell's fall. J. Tanner attributed eighty-five printed and manuscript works to Bale, while Charles Cooper extended the number to ninety. See Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee (eds.), Dictionary of National Biography, 63 vols. with supplementary volumes (London, 1885- ), vol.1, p.962. King, English Reformation Literature, p.56. Happé remarks that it is likely that the playwright did not write any new play after the end of the 1530s. See Happé, The Complete Plays of John Bale, vol.1, p.7. For some of the known titles of Bale's polemical plays, see appendix 3. Cf. McCusker, John Bale, dramatist and antiquary (Bryn Mawr, Pa., 1942), pp.72-3. Pafford, King Johan (The Malone Society Reprint, 1931), xxii.

<sup>39</sup> Blatt, The Plays of John Bale, pp.130. Cf. Chambers, ES, vol.1, p.242.



‘This is the onely cause of your blusteryng and blowyng, your roaryng and ragynge, your impresonyng and burnynge of the sayd godly ministers, be they writers or preachers, players or syngers.’<sup>40</sup>

Bale’s affiliation with Cromwell, as shown above in Cromwell’s household account, was evident. Chambers points out that Bale appears to have been the principal agent of Cromwell’s statecraft in an attempt to capture so powerful an engine as the stage in the interests of Protestantism.<sup>41</sup> It is nevertheless difficult to say when precisely Bale, as a Reformation propagandist, received the recognition of Cromwell. White suggests that he was possibly introduced to the minister either by Lord Thomas Wentworth of Suffolk, his mentor, or by the earl of Oxford, his other patron at court. Nevertheless, it seems fairly clear that by the July of 1534, when Bale left the Carmelite House in Ipswich to head the priory at Doncaster, he had come under Cromwell’s protection.<sup>42</sup> Bale himself also mentioned some of his early interaction with Cromwell. After converting to the new religion and taking a wife, he was in trouble. He was ‘deprived of all possessions’ and ‘dragged from the pulpit to the courts of justices, first under Lee at York’ in 1534, and then ‘under Stokesley at London’ two years later. And it was ‘the pious Cromwell’ who always set the playwright free ‘on account of the comedies’ that Bale had published.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Blatt, *ibid.*, p.131. This reference of Bale’s written in August 1544 was to defend the playwright’s own activities.

<sup>41</sup> Chambers, *ES*, vol.1, p.242.

<sup>42</sup> White, *Theatre and Reformation*, p.15. White also suggests that Bale, probably from early 1537 to early 1540, was under Cromwell’s direct patronage. See *ibid.*, p.16.

<sup>43</sup> John Bale, ‘Autobiography’ in his *Scriptorum Illustrium maioris Britanniae...Catalogus* (Basel, 1557), vol.1, pp.702-4. The quotation here is based on the translation of Peter Happé. See Happé (ed), *The Complete Plays of John Bale*, vol.1, p.147 (appendix II). For about the two incidents, see Blatt, *The Plays of John Bale*, pp.13, 29-30. A.G. Dickens, *Lollards and Protestants in the Diocese of York, 1509-1558* (London, 1959), pp.140-1. Happé, *ibid.*, vol.1, p.4. *L&P, Henry VIII*, vol.12(1), no.230. Cf. McCusker, *John Bale*, p.13.

Cromwell's patronage of Bale was not confined to his playwriting; he was also the sponsor of Bale's playing company. Few performing records of Bale's players are now extant, so details of a performance in December 1538 provide precious information. In an inclosure in the letter that Archbishop Cranmer sent to Cromwell on 11 January 1539, testimony against one Henry Totehill was given:

'John Alforde, of thage of 18 yeres, examined, saith, that by reason that he had ben in Christmas tyme at my Lorde of Canterbury's, and ther had harde an enterlude concernyng King John, about 8 or 9 of the clocke at night; and Thursdaye, the seconde daye of Januarye last paste, spake theis wourdes folowing in the house of the said Thomas Brown,--That it ys petie that the Bisshop of Rome should reigne any lenger, for if he should, the said Bisshop wold do with our King as he did with King John. Wherunto (this deponent saith) that Henry Totehill answered and said, That it was petie and nawghtely don, to put down the Pope ans Saincte Thomas; for the Pope was a good man, and Sainete Thomas savid many suche as this deponent was from hangyng: whiche wourdes were spoken in the presence of Thomas Browne and one William servaunte unto the said Totehill.'<sup>44</sup>

Alforde's testimony is valuable for it not only shows Cromwell's religious policy—insisting the Royal Supremacy, but also discloses certain details of the performance held at Cranmer's household: the performance was given during the Christmas season at around eight or nine o'clock.<sup>45</sup> The content of the play was about King John, and the moral of the piece was certainly anti-papal and preaching English religious independence.

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<sup>44</sup> John E. Cox (ed.), Miscellaneous Writings and Letters of Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, Martyr, 1556 (Cambridge, 1846), p.388 (hereafter Miscellaneous Writings). In the following passages, similar testimonies given by Thomas Brown and Antony Marten are enclosed.

<sup>45</sup> It is not clear which day exactly of the Christmastide was the performance given. Pafford's argument is based on J.P. Collier's study, which is slightly different from the one collected in Cox's Miscellaneous Writings. The item in Collier's version is as following: 'in Christmas tyme at my lorde of Canterburys', there had been acted 'an enterlude cocernyng king Iohn/aboute viij or ix of the clocke at nyght on thursdaye the seconde Daye of Ianuarye.' In Cox's version, however, it seems that 2 January was the day on which that Totehill said those 'improper' words which had put him into trouble. See Pafford, King Johan, xviii. Cf. Cox, ibid., p.388.

John E. Cox comments that the 'King John' performed at Cranmer's household was probably the one written by John Bale.<sup>46</sup> Cranmer was certainly one of Bale's patrons. In 1538, for instance, the playwright dedicated his translation of the Latin version of Thomas Kirchmayer's Pammachius to the Archbishop.<sup>47</sup> Cox's argument is supported by J.H.P. Pafford, who even suggests that the play could be the one performed before Cromwell on the 31st of January 1539.<sup>48</sup> Whether King Johan was performed in both Cranmer's and Cromwell's households or not, Cromwell was doubtless the major sponsor of Bale's company. As shown above, 'Balle and his felowes' performed twice before Cromwell in his household, and were very generously rewarded. Pafford, believes that between 1536/7 and 1540, the playing troupe under Bale's leadership was in fact the one described as 'Lord Cromwell's Players' or 'the Lord Privy Seal's Men' in municipal, monastic, and collegiate records.<sup>49</sup> This argument is supported by many other scholars, including Blatt, McCusker and Harris.<sup>50</sup>

With the support of scholars like Pafford, it is now safe to assume that Cromwell's troupe was the one led by Bale; more exploration of the company can therefore be carried on. For convenience, the company shall be called the

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<sup>46</sup> See Cox ibid., p.388n.

<sup>47</sup> White, Theatre and Reformation, p.194 n.17.

<sup>48</sup> Pafford (ed.), King Johan, xviii. White considers Pafford's opinion highly conjectural. See White, ibid., p.194, n.17.

<sup>49</sup> Pafford, ibid., xvii-xviii. Cf. White, ibid., pp.17-8.

<sup>50</sup> See Blatt, The Plays of John Bale, pp.30-1, McCusker, John Bale, p.75, Jesse W. Harris, 'John Bale. A study in the minor literature of the reformation' in Illinois Studies in Language and Literature, 25: 4 (Urbana, 1940), pp.101-3.

Bale/Cromwell's players in the following discussion. There are fourteen records, belonging to eleven locations, of the Bale/Cromwell's players. The chronological order of these records are as follows: Ludlow, Shrewsbury, Leicester and Oxford, Cambridge, Thetford, and Canterbury (St. Stephen's Church) (1537-8), Canterbury (Archbishop Cranmer's household), Cambridge (1538), Cromwell's household (possibly in London) (1538-9), Thetford, Cambridge (1539-40), and Maldon and York (1540).<sup>51</sup> With these records, it is possible to conjecture the touring of the company between 1537 and 1540.

Generally speaking, the touring of the Bale/Cromwell's players can be divided into four major routes: the Midlands, Kentish, East Anglia, and the north country tours.<sup>52</sup> The Midlands tour was held in 1537-8,<sup>53</sup> containing at least four major locations: Leicester, Shrewsbury, Ludlow, and Oxford.<sup>54</sup> Embarking from London

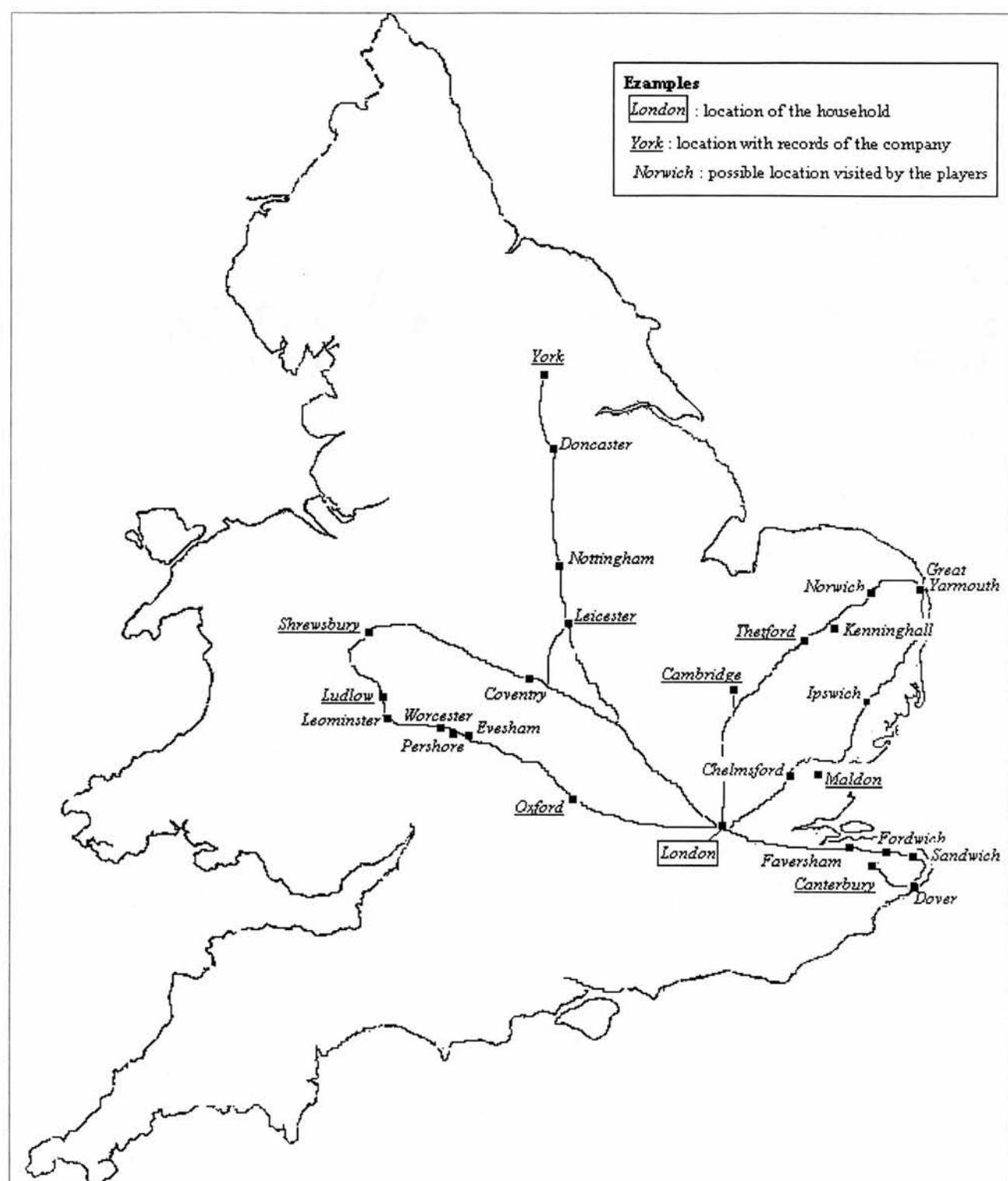
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<sup>51</sup> These fourteen entries are based on the data collected (see introduction) and Paul White's book. Apart from some exceptions, my data is mostly consonant with White's. There are five entries mentioned in White's book that are not found in my database; they are Oxford and Thetford, 1537-8, Cranmer's household and Cambridge, 1538, and Thetford 1539-40, while the entry of Ludlow (1537-8) is not mentioned by White. As White did not specify the source of those five 'unfound' entries, I am not able to further examine the entries. But as Oxford and Thetford are locations that no complete REED volumes are available, and White's sources are generally reliable, I include these five entries into our discussion. See also White, *Theatre and Reformation*, p.22. Nevertheless, there is one entry at Shrewsbury in 1536-7 which recorded 'Given to entertainer of Thomas Cromwell, 12d.' As the essence of the entertainer is not specified, and only one person (not necessarily belongs to a troupe) was rewarded, this entry is not included in our present discussion. See J. Alan B. Somerset (ed.), *Records of Early English Drama. Shropshire* (London, c.1994), p.195.

<sup>52</sup> See Map 2. White's conjecture of the company's touring is both pioneering and valuable. But in some points, I have slightly different opinion from his. Cf. White, *Theatre and Reformation*, pp.23-7.

<sup>53</sup> White defines the performance held in Shrewsbury was in 1537. The REED volume of Shropshire, the source of my database, gives it in a wider range, 1537-8. See White, *ibid.*, p.22, and REED, *Shropshire*, p.196.

<sup>54</sup> As discussed in chapter 1, many locations that have been visited by travelling players did not leave us any records. In other words, the Bale/Cromwell's players could have visited more than these four locations on the tour.



Map 3: The Touring of the Cromwell/Bale's Players

(Cromwell's household), the players set out in a northwesterly direction along Watling Street. They first arrived in Leicester, which would have required them to turn northeast at the junction of Watling Street and the Fosse Way.<sup>55</sup> As there was no direct road connecting Leicester and Shrewsbury, it is conceivable that the troupe then turned southwest, returning to Watling Street, and continued their travel northwest, possibly taking the road linking Coventry and Shrewsbury. Leaving Shrewsbury, the company headed south to another major town of the county, Ludlow, and then embarked on their return journey.<sup>56</sup> As Oxford is the next destination known to us, it is likely that the troupe headed further south to Leominster after leaving Ludlow, and then turned east to Worcester. Between Worcester and Oxford, there was a road linking the two cities directly, and the players could have stopped in towns, such as Pershore and Evesham, which were on the way.<sup>57</sup> Oxford would have been an important stop for the propagandist touring of the troupe. They performed at the New College, perhaps in the college hall or chapel. Here, Bale's 'King Johan' and 'Three Laws', which attacked monastic life, were performed. White suggests that these plays would have been done particularly well, as the College Warden, Dr John London, was Cromwell's agent in charge of the

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<sup>55</sup> It is more difficult to decide whether Leicester should be included in this Midlands tour or should it be considered as a stop in the north country one, as Leicester was not on the line linking London and Shrewsbury, but on the road from London to the northern towns, such as Newcastle (could compare with the touring of the duke and duchess of Suffolk's players in the following section of the chapter). White allocates Leicester as a stop of the company's Midlands tour, which is acceptable, for although visiting Leicester was less convenient to the troupe, it was not unachievable. And as the troupe visited Leicester in 1537-8, it is not likely the touring to Leicester was part of the company's trip to the north, which took place in around 1540. White also suggests that, at Leicester, the troupe might have performed in the guildhall or the St. Martin's Church. See White, *Theatre and Reformation*, pp.24-5.

<sup>56</sup> White has suggested that the troupe might have visited Coventry on their returning journey. But as the players later visited Ludlow, after leaving Shrewsbury, it is less likely that the troupe would head to Coventry, which had no direct link with Ludlow. See White, *ibid.*, p.25.

<sup>57</sup> For the roads available under the Tudors, see Map 1 in Chapter 1.

suppression of greater monasteries.<sup>58</sup>

After the Midlands tour, the company apparently confined their performance more to the south-eastern part of the country before 1540. The travelling of the period can be divided into two parts: one to Kent, and the other to East Anglia. The Kentish tour was mainly based on the two performing records at Canterbury: one held at St. Stephen's Church on September 8, 1537-8, and the other on the Christmas of 1538 at Cranmer's household.<sup>59</sup> Before arriving in Canterbury, the troupe could have performed at several Kentish towns on the road, such as Faversham, Fordwich, Sandwich, and Dover.

The East Anglia tour was taken at around the same period of time as the Kentish one. The Bale/Cromwell's players performed at Cambridge and Thetford Priory in 1537-8, Cambridge in 1538, and Thetford Priory again in 1539-40. As Cambridge was on the way from London to Thetford, it is very likely that the troupe always stopped at Cambridge on their tour to Thetford. Thetford however was not the farthest town that the company could reach and the customary East Anglia route went further northeast, passing Kenninghall, Norwich, and on to Great Yarmouth.<sup>60</sup> From Great Yarmouth, the players had to head for their return journey, turning south, possibly performing at towns along the route, such as Ipswich,<sup>61</sup> Maldon,<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> White, *Theatre and Reformation*, p.25. See also G.H. Cook, *Letters to Cromwell and others on the Suppression of the Monasteries* (London, 1965), p.9.

<sup>59</sup> See discussion above.

<sup>60</sup> The 'game house' of Great Yarmouth was used for presentation of interludes and plays. But as the manager, Robert Copping, was instructed not to take profits for the performances, no record of travelling companies is left to us. See White, *Theatre and Reformation*, p.26.

<sup>61</sup> A copy of Bale's 'King Johan' was among the Corporation's documents dated about 1560. See



Chelmsford, before arriving in the capital. This tour was not infrequently taken; important troupes, such as the King's and the duke of Norfolk's players all made it. We do not know whether the Bale/Cromwell's players travelled thus far in their 1537-8 voyage; but as they were at Maldon in 1540, it is very likely that they did try the longer route in this later trip.<sup>63</sup>

The last touring of the company was their travel to the north. The journey was taken at around 1540, about the last stage of their patron's career. The company embarked from London, heading to York. They probably have stopped by the locations along the road, such as Leicester, Nottingham, and Doncaster, where Bale was prior of the Carmelite house based there in 1534.<sup>64</sup> The company disappeared from the stage when their patron fell from power.

The Cromwell/Bale's company was not the only one that was responsible for promoting the new religion. The prosperity of polemical plays in the period suggests that many more livery troupes were bestowed the same duty. Unfortunately, not

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White, *ibid.*, p.26. Cf. Pafford, *King Johan*, vi.

<sup>62</sup> There is an entry of the company's performance at Maldon in 1540. White suggests this visit was part of the company's north country tour. But as there is no direct line connecting Maldon and Cambridge (the next stop according to White), it is unlikely that the troupe would have begun at Maldon and then toured to Cambridge (I cannot find the 'direct road mentioned in White's discussion in either his map or the from Sally-Beth MacLean's study of touring routes). I am therefore more inclined to believe that the visit to Maldon was part of the East Anglia tour taken by the troupe by 1540. For White's argument, see his *ibid.*, p.27.

<sup>63</sup> White suggests that locations like Hadleigh, the parish owned by Archbishop Cranmer, West Ham, Colchester and Heybridge were also available to the troupe. See White, *ibid.*, pp.26-7.

<sup>64</sup> White has different opinion of the troupe's northern tour. He suspects that the troupe may have first visited Cambridge, then toured along Ermine Street through Stamford, Lincoln, and Doncaster, and finally to York. I do not quite agree with White's conjecture, for this route was much more circuitous and not necessarily more profitable. But as we got only one entry of the northern tour, neither conjecture can be fully supported. See *ibid.*, p.27.



many propagandist acting companies have left such fulsome information. Apart from the Cromwell/Bale's Men, the only well-documented polemical troupe is Suffolk's company, which is our next focus.

## ii. Katherine, Duchess of Suffolk, and the Suffolk's Players

'When GOD had taken for our Sin,  
That prudent Prince King Edward away,  
Then bloody Bonner did begin  
His raging Malice to bewray;  
All those that did GOD's Word profess,  
He persecuted more or less.

Thus while the LORD on us did low'r,  
Many in Prison he did throw,  
Tormenting them in *Lollard's* Tower,  
Whereby they might be Truth forego:  
Then *Cranmer*, *Ridley*, and the rest,  
Were burning in the Fire, that CHRIST profess'd.

....  
'The Dutchess of *Suffolk* seeing this,  
Whose Life likewise the Tyrant sought,  
Who in the Hopes of Heavenly Bliss,  
Within GOD's Word her Comfort wrought;  
For fear of Death was forc'd to fly,  
And leave her House most secretly.

'That for the Love of GOD alone,  
Her Land and Goods she left behind,  
Seeking still that Precious Stone,  
The Word and Truth so rare to find;  
She with her Husband, Nurse, and Child,  
In poor Array their Sighs beguil'd.<sup>65</sup>

The ballad, entitled 'The Most Rare and Excellent History of the Duchess of Suffolk and her Husband Richard Bertie's Calamity', was written by Thomas Deloney, a silk-weaver and balladeer. It described the most distinguished phase of the life of our heroine, Katherine Willoughby, duchess of Suffolk and her exile from England for

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<sup>65</sup> Peregrine Bertie, A Memoir of Peregrine Bertie, Eleventh Lord Willoughby de Eresby, Commander-in-Chief of Queen Elizabeth's Forces in the Low Countries, and in France; and Governor of Berwick (London, 1838), appendix.

her Protestant faith.<sup>66</sup> As the ballad reveals, religion was the most crucial part of Katherine's life and the duchess's strong attachment the new teachings had made her an important Protestant patroness of the time.

Katherine was born in 1520 at Parham Old Hall. She was the only child of William Willoughby, eighth Lord Willoughby de Eresby, and his Spanish wife Mary de Salines.<sup>67</sup> After Mary Tudor, Henry VIII's younger sister, died in June 1533, Charles Brandon, the duke of Suffolk, married Katherine, his ward, making her his fourth wife.<sup>68</sup> Katherine appears to be a loving wife and mother. She accompanied the duke on various occasions and performed her role as a duchess with propriety.

The turning point for Katherine was her conversion to Protestantism. We do not know when exactly she converted to the new religion, but it appears to be sometime during the 1530s and the Cambridge reformer Hugh Latimer played a crucial role.<sup>69</sup> From 1530 onwards, Latimer began to preach from time to time at court, and it is very likely that his eloquence impressed the young duchess, who often attended the sermons with her husband.<sup>70</sup> Latimer was dismissed from court in

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<sup>66</sup> Read, Catherine, Duke of Suffolk: A Portrait (London, 1962), p.129. Katherine's mother, Mary de Salines, was Spanish, who accompanied Queen Katherine of Aragon to England.

<sup>67</sup> DNB, vol.2, p.403. Read, ibid., p.21. Lady Georgina Bertie, Five Generations of A Loyal House (London, 1845), pp.2-3.

<sup>68</sup> Lord William died in October 1526; Katherine, the heiress became the ward of Charles Brandon, duke of Suffolk. See Read, ibid., p.25. L&P, Henry VIII, vol.4:3, p.2433. Cf. S.J. Gunn, Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, c.1484-1545 (Oxford, 1988), pp.95-6. For the marriage, see Read ibid., p.32. DNB, vol.2, p.403, Gunn, ibid., p.132 and L&P, Henry VIII, vol.6, p.453.

<sup>69</sup> Evelyn Read suggests that by the later part of the 1530s, the duchess was definitely turning to the new religion. One evidence was that some time in the later 1530s, the duke and duchess appointed one Alexander Seton, a Scottish Protestant, as their private chaplain. See Read, ibid., p.51.

<sup>70</sup> Read, Catherine, Duchess of Suffolk, p.38. Allan G. Chester suggests that Katherine's admiration

1539,<sup>71</sup> but he seems to have continued his friendship with the duchess for the rest of his life.<sup>72</sup>

Apart from Latimer, Katherine also kept close friendship with some eminent Protestants, Martin Bucer among them. Bucer was a German theologian, who was invited by Thomas Cranmer to come to England, and was appointed Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge. Katherine's acquaintance with Bucer was through her sons, Henry and Charles, who were then studying in the University, under Bucer. Katherine probably attended Bucer's lectures, and became his devoted friend. Bucer died on February 27, 1551, only a little over a year after his arriving in Cambridge.<sup>73</sup> On the day of Bucer's death, Katherine wrote to Cecil asking for a generous pension for his family.<sup>74</sup>

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for Latimer probably antedated the court sermons of 1549, for the first printed version of those sermons was dedicated to her and bore her coat-of-arms on the reverse of the title-page. See Allan G. Chester, Hugh Latimer: Apostle to the English (Philadelphia, 1954), p.186.

<sup>71</sup> DNB, vol.11, p.617.

<sup>72</sup> During the year 1552, the expelled minister Latimer a great deal of time at Grimsthorpe, the household of Katherine, preaching in the lady's private chapel. And when Katherine re-married to Richard Bertie, the minister was possibly the one who joined the two. And as Chester points out, Katherine's continuing devotion to Latimer's memory is reflected in the fact that all the early editions of Latimer's collected sermons were dedicated to the duchess by their editors. Read, Catherine, Duchess of Suffolk, pp.57, 91-2. See also Chester, Hugh Latimer, pp.186-7.

<sup>73</sup> Read, Catherine, Duchess of Suffolk, pp.81-2. When Queen Mary visited Cambridge in 1557, the chest containing Bucer's body was taken up, and set against a stake in the Market Place and burnt. It was not until Elizabeth's reign that the rights of English citizenship were restored to Bucer's family. See Goff, A Woman of the Tudor Age, p.191n.

<sup>74</sup> Robert Lemon (ed.), Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reign of Edward VI, Mary, Elizabeth, 1547-1580 (London, 1856), p.32. What is worthy of mentioning is that Brucer was one of those Protestant scholars who recognised the role of drama as a vehicle of moral and religious instruction. See G. Wickham, Early English stages, 1300 to 1660, 3 vols. (London, 1959-1981), vol.2 pt.1, pp.329-31; White, Theatre and Reformation, p.172.

Brandon died on 22 August 1545,<sup>75</sup> and thereafter Katherine's devotion to the new religion becomes more manifest.<sup>76</sup> When Edward VI became King, Katherine soon 'distinguished herself by her zeal for the reformation.'<sup>77</sup> She later married to Richard Bertie, another zealous Protestant in 1552. The couple was soon forced to flee to the continent under Mary's reign, but when Elizabeth ascended to the throne, Katherine and Richard returned to England, harbouring high hopes of the new queen's more advanced Protestant policy. The expectation turned out to be disappointed and as a result the duchess gradually turned her attention to family issues. Katherine died on 19 September 1580, and was buried in the church at Spilsby, Lincolnshire.<sup>78</sup>

Before we enter the discussion of Katherine's patronage of players, we shall first examine the duchess's network of patronage. Amongst those under her wing, Hugh Latimer was the most famous. When Latimer left the court in 1539, he retired to Katherine's Lincolnshire estate at Grimsthorpe as her household chaplain. John Harington the elder and Thomas Some, the editors of Latimer's sermons, also dedicated their works to her. Apart from Latimer and his friends, the duchess also

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<sup>75</sup> DNB, vol.2, p.403. Read, Catherine, Duchess of Suffolk, p.48.

<sup>76</sup> See also Gunn, Charles Brandon, p.198. Gunn argues that Brandon never took up the new faith with the enthusiasm of his wife. His own beliefs remained 'on the conservative side of ambiguity.' See ibid., pp.199-200.

<sup>77</sup> DNB, vol.2, p.403.

<sup>78</sup> Lady Georgina Bertie's words fairly well described the life of Katherine, the duchess of Suffolk: she was 'one of the most distinguished ladies of the day'; it was not only because of her 'great descent' and 'princely fortune', but, above all, because of her 'heroic courage and religious zeal, to which she and her husband had nearly fallen martyrs. See Bertie, Five Generations of A Loyal House, p.2. For more about Katherine's life, see also Robert Lemon and M.A.E. Green (eds.), Calendar of State Papers, Domestic series, of the Reigns of Edward VI, Mary, Elizabeth, (James I) 1547-1580, 12 vols. (London, 1856-72), vol.1, pp.120, 123; cf. Read, Catherine, Duchess of Suffolk, p.133-5.

sponsored other men of letters. One of them was Thomas Wilson, tutor of her two sons and a fellow reformer; Wilson completed his two important works The Rule of Reason (1531) and The Art of Rhetorique (1553) while serving the Brandon family.<sup>79</sup>

Katherine very possibly underwrote the publications of some books promoting the Reformation. John Day and William Seres used her coat of arms in their publications; they printed the Suffolk arms in five editions that appeared in quick succession in 1548 and 1549: the Apocrapha and New Testament, Latimer's Sermon on the Plowers, William Tyndale's Exposicion uppon Matthew, and a translation of Pierre Viret's Exposition of the Apostles creed. Moreover, Day also dedicated Joannes Epinus' Exposition upon the XV. Psalme (c.1550) to Katherine. Since taking such a large share of the Reformation book trade, as Day and Seres did, requires a significant source of capital, John N. King suggests that the publishers would have had the support of a wealthy sponsor, and that could have been Katherine.<sup>80</sup>

Katherine's importance as a patron was not only in her adherent religious attachment, but in her gender as well. She was one of the few important patronesses in an era when male figures manipulated most power and resources. Although a minority, Katherine was not isolated, being a member of Queen Catherine's circle. Various evidences show that the Queen and the duchess enjoyed a close friendship.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> King, English Reformation Literature, p.105.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., pp.105-6. King also mentioned one Miles Coverdale was working under the patronage of the Duchesses of Somerset and Suffolk. See ibid., p.131.

<sup>81</sup> Queen Catherine and the duchess probably had some family links. For Parr's second husband was Lord Latimer, while, according to Collin's Peerage, Dorothy Willoughby, Katherine's aunt, had been married to a Lord Latimer. See Lady Cecilie Goff, A Woman of the Tudor Age (London, 1930).

One example is that the duchess was not only one of the few who were present at Parr's wedding ceremony to the King, but also one of the earliest informed about the widow queen's engagement to Thomas Seymour after the King's death.<sup>82</sup> And when Parr died in 1548, she had her newly-born daughter given over to the duchess's protection.<sup>83</sup>

The two Katherines were certainly great friends. In Chapuy's letter to Mary of Hungary, the ambassador identified the duchess, along with 'Countess of Hertford and the Admiral's wife' as those who 'instigated' the Queen's faith.<sup>84</sup> However, Parr was less devoted in religion than the duchess. James McConica describes her as a 'moderate Protestant.' She did provide shelter to various Protestant humanists, such as Miles Coverdale, Latimer, and John Parkhurst,<sup>85</sup> but it was probably more for scholastic reasons than for religious one. Nevertheless, after Cromwell's fall, the patronage of humanists shifted from the Secretary's ring to the Parr circle, and the duchess was one of the members.<sup>86</sup>

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pp.150-1.

<sup>82</sup> In around May 1547, Lord Seymour wrote to the Queen disclosing that, 'I perceived I have [the duchess of] Suffolk's good will touching my desire of you: she told my friend Sir William Sharington she wishes me to be married to their mistress--as would I...' (SP 10/1, no.43). Seymour probably had secretly married Parr already, for he signed at the end of the letter as 'Yo<sup>r</sup> lovyng and faythfull hosbonde.' See C. S. Knighton (ed.), Calendar of State Papers Domestic Series of the Reign of Edward VI, 1547-1553, Preserved in the Public Record Office (London, 1992), no.42; cf. Lemon's edition of CSPD, p.3.

<sup>83</sup> CSPD, p.21.

<sup>84</sup> L&P, Henry VIII, vol.21(2), p.386. Cf. Goff, A Woman of the Tudor Age, p.170. Goff however assigned the passage as in the letter of Van der Delft to the Emperor.

<sup>85</sup> James K. McConica, English Humanists and Reformation Politics under Henry VIII and Edward VI (Oxford, 1965), p.215.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p.201. For more about Parr's attachment to humanist learning, see DNB, vol.3, 'Catherine Parr'.

Katherine's patronage of men of letters was not confined to those humanists; some dramatists, such as Nicholas Udall, also received the duchess's sponsorship.<sup>87</sup> Katherine was actually a person who not only enjoyed theatrical performance, but was also well aware of the propagandist power of the genre. Her two major homes, Grimsthorpe in Lincolnshire and the Barbican (later called the Willoughby house) in London, were important venues of travelling performers.<sup>88</sup>

Grimsthorpe, where Katherine spent most of her time, used to be the old Beamont house. When Henry VIII in 1541, on his northern progress, decided to stay at this estate, Brandon rebuilt almost the entire buildings in honour of the royal visit. Music and entertainment were then provided to amuse the King.<sup>89</sup> As in most noble households of the time, it was the convention of Grimsthorpe to hold special festivities at Christmas, when one of the customs was to appoint an abbot or lord of misrule.<sup>90</sup> Items connected with Christmas figure in the duchess' household accounts:

'To George, Mr. Pelham's man, to furnish himself Lord of Christmas, and his men in a livery, 40s.  
To George, the lorde of good order, for my master's gift to him, 10s.

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<sup>87</sup> See Greg Walker, The Politics of Performance in Early Renaissance Drama (Cambridge, 1998), p.166.

<sup>88</sup> The household book shows that the number of the household listed comes to nearly one hundred. The duchess was fond of country life, so the family usually spent their winter months in London (sometimes at Court at Greenwich), and the rest of the year in the country. See Read, Catherine, Duchess of Suffolk, pp.147-9. Read has a fairly detailed description of the Katherine's household book between 1560-2. See ibid., pp.147-66.

<sup>89</sup> Goff, A Woman of the Tudor Age, pp.125-6. Read, Catherine, Duchess of Suffolk, pp.46-8.

<sup>90</sup> According to Goff, the custom went on much longer in England than it did on the Continent, and was only abolished in the reign of James I. See Goff, ibid., p.267.



To the offeringes, Salmon [Clerk of the Provisions], being busshop, by my Ladies grace, geven by my master, 6s.<sup>91</sup>

Apart from these conventional celebrations, it was not uncommon for the duchess to receive travelling entertainers, mostly at Grimsthorpe, for her household. As Cecelie Goff has pointed out, the monotony of the life at Grimsthorpe, from which the nearest market-town, Bourne, was five miles, must have made the arrival of foreign performers very much welcomed. In fact, the household accounts around 1561 show that many performers were warmly received:

Sir Francis Foskewes players, which came to offer themselves to playe before my Ladye's grace, 3s 4d.  
To Goods, the Master of Fense, and his companie, which played before herr Grace, 13s 4d.  
To Two men whcih played upon the puppets two nighs before herr Grace.  
To my Lord Robert Dudleyes players at Grimsthorpe, which offered themselves to play but dyd not. 10s.  
To a servant of my Lord Willowbies which offered to play and singe before my master, and her grace 20d.  
To two of my Lord Robart Dudleies men which came to play before them upon the drume, and the phiph, 6s.  
To my Lord of Arundalles players, 6s 6d.  
To the waightes of London, 5s.  
To the Queen's violin at New Yeres tyde, 20s.  
To the Earl of Warwick's players, 7s 6d.  
To the waites that played at her Graces lodging at the Corte, 20d.  
May; To a moresse dawncer of Little Bytham.<sup>92</sup>  
July 1562. To the Quenes players which played at Grimsthorpe, 20s.  
To the waightes of Lyncolne in rewarde for playing. 3s 4d.<sup>93</sup>  
To my Lord of Rutland's man that played upon the lute, 6s.  
To a bagge piper which played a songe before my master and her Grace at Eirsbie, 3s 4d.  
To divers noblemens trumpiters to the numbere of ten, 20s.  
To the Queen's trumpiters, 20s.  
To Robt. Lettes, and Robt. Balle of Godmanchester, musitians, 20s.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.267-8.

<sup>92</sup> Little Bytham was a village four miles from Grimsthorpe.

<sup>93</sup> Lincoln is thirty miles from Grimsthorpe.

<sup>94</sup> Goff, *A Woman of the Tudor Age*, pp.266-7. Could compare Goff's records with Read's. See Read, *Catherine, Duchess of Suffolk*, pp.154-6.



Apparently, Grimsthorpe was very popular to travelling players or leading troupes of the time, such as players of the earls of Leicester (Robert Dudley), Warwick (Ambrose Dudley), and minor troupes, such as Fortescue's and Arundel's players, were all received there.

Katherine's fondness for drama was not confined to her warm reception of itinerant players and she kept her own acting companies. In the early 1560s, the duchess of Suffolk's players were fairly active within the realm. Before we can further pursue our discussion on Katherine's company, we should firstly clear up confusion over the noblewomen who may be designated by the title of duchess of Suffolk. When Katherine married Charles Brandon in 1533, she succeeded Mary Tudor, becoming the new duchess of Suffolk. Brandon died in 1545, leaving Katherine two sons, Henry and Charles. The eldest son, Henry, thus succeeded his father, becoming the fifth duke of Suffolk. Unfortunately, both Henry and Charles died in 1551 of the sweating sickness. As Henry left no issue, the dukedom of Suffolk came to Henry Gray, husband of Frances Brandon, eldest daughter of Charles and the French Queen. Although, in theory, Katherine was now the dowager duchess, while Frances the formal duchess of Suffolk, it appears that the duchess of Suffolk's players, who were active in the 1560s, belonged to Katherine, and not to Frances. There are two pieces of evidence supporting this argument. First, before Frances's death on 21 November 1559, there was no record of her keeping an acting company for the household. And secondly, Katherine continued to employ the title for the rest of her life, even after she was re-married to Bertie. In her letters to Cecil, for example, she always signed as 'K. Suffolk'.<sup>95</sup> Considering these two facts, it is

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<sup>95</sup> See Read, *ibid.*, p.87.

therefore safe for us to attribute the records of duchess of Suffolk's players to Katherine's company.

There are twenty-seven entries for the duchess of Suffolk's players. Generally, they can be divided into two eras—before and after Katherine's exile (there are no records of the company under Mary's reign). To understand better the first period of duchess of Suffolk's players, we shall combine their touring with that of the duke of Suffolk's players. Charles Brandon, duke of Suffolk, began to keep his own playing troupe as early as in 1522-3. The company continued to perform in various locations under the duke's title until 1543-4 (Brandon died in 1545). Thereafter, no records of Brandon's players appear in our data between 1545-6. Nevertheless, in 1547-8, a 'new' company under the title of duchess of Suffolk's players began to tour the provinces. As their touring route was very similar to that of the duke's, it is reasonable to assume that the two groups, which both came from the Brandon household, were in fact the same one. For convenience of our present discussion, I shall refer to the troupe as the duke and duchess of Suffolk's players (or Suffolk's players).

The Suffolk's players appeared in the records of seventeen counties and areas, Kent being their favourite, which contains fourteen entries. Besides Kent, their visits to other counties were fairly average: Yorkshire (4), Cambridgeshire, Essex, Gloucestershire, Suffolk, and Sussex (3), Hampshire and Shropshire (2), Dorset, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, London, Middlesex, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, and Northumberland (1). Amongst those locations visited by the players, Dover was the most popular one with the company performing there at least eight times. Other

places, such as Beverley, Cambridge, Ipswich, Lydd, and Rye, all exhibiting three entries for the troupe, were also regularly visited by the players. The remaining locations only received the company occasionally: Bristol, Canterbury, Maldon, and Southampton (2), Chelmsford, Cromwell's Household, Folkestone, Gloucester, Hampton Court, Leicester, Long Sutton, Ludlow, Lyme Regis, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Norwich, Peterborough, Shrewsbury, and York (1).<sup>96</sup>

A more useful picture appears if we apply this information to reconstruct the travelling of the Suffolk's players. Generally speaking, the touring of the company consisted of four major circuits—the Kent, western, East Anglia, and northern tours.<sup>97</sup> The Kent tour, which contained major Kentish towns, such as Dover, Lydd, Folkestone, and Canterbury, and Sussex's Rye, was the one most frequently taken by the Suffolk's players. Taking London as their base,<sup>98</sup> the company could travel clockwise visiting Greenwich, Faversham, Fordwich, Sandwich, to Dover, and then either turn west to Canterbury and then to Rye in Sussex, or continue along the coast line from Dover, visiting Folkestone, Hythe, New Romney, Lydd, and to Rye. Rye seems to be the last major location in their tour and from Rye, there was a road directing to the capital, completing the circuit. The company did not usually make the whole trip, however. In 1522-3, and 1523-4, for example, only records of their visiting Dover are left. In 1547-8 again, the troupe made a single trip to Canterbury and in 1559-60 to Dover.<sup>99</sup> A more complete picture of the troupe's Kentish tour

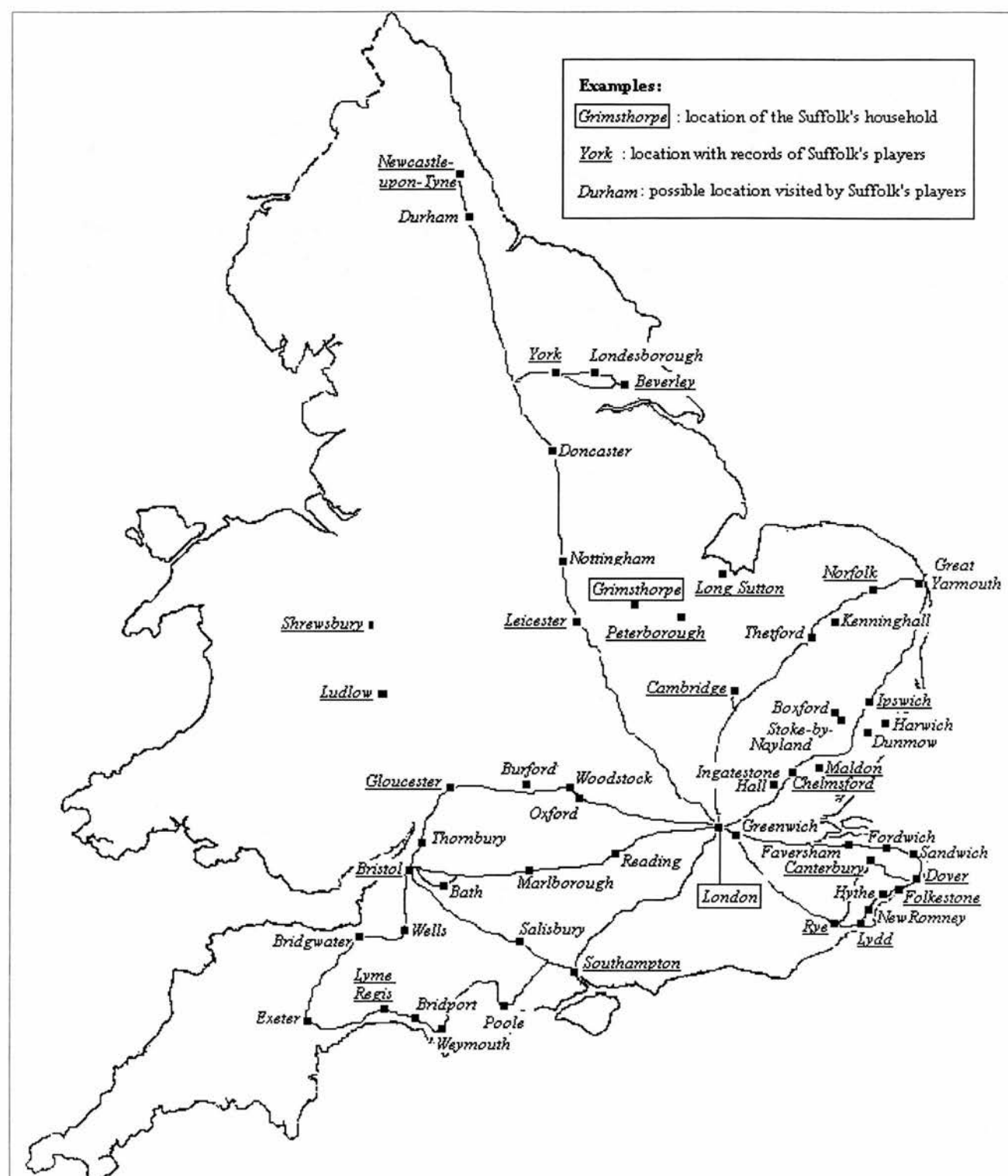
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<sup>96</sup> For a complete list, see appendix 6.

<sup>97</sup> For the circuits of Suffolk's players, see map 4.

<sup>98</sup> Katherine's had a house at Barbican.

<sup>99</sup> Of course, as many records are extinct, one can never be sure that whether Canterbury or Dover was the only location they visited.



Map 4: The Touring of the Suffolk's Players

appears between 1539 and 1542. During the period, the company toured the whole circuit at least twice: they were at Dover, Lydd and Rye in 1540-1, and at Dover, Folkestone, Lydd and Rye in 1541-2.<sup>100</sup> In 1552-3 and 1562-3, the troupe resumed its touring and was at Dover and Rye in 1552-3, and Dover and Canterbury in 1562-3.

The western tours taken by the company were less consistent than the Kentish one. In 1524-5, 1529-30, 1543-4, the troupe, under the title of the duke, performed at Shrewsbury, Southampton, and Ludlow respectively. But as these records are isolated from others, we can not reconstruct the possible routes taken by the players. Travel to the south-west was more completely recorded under Katherine's patronage. In 1560-1, the duchess of Suffolk's players performed at Lyme Regis (on around 4 November) and at Bristol (between 10-16 November). In the following years, the company repeated the tour: they were at Southampton in 1561-2 (around 17 November) in 1561-2, Bristol (between 15-21 November) and Gloucester in 1562-3.

According to these two series of entries, a more credible picture of the troupe's touring appears. Departing from London, in 1560-1, it could have gone south-west to Southampton, and then further west, passing towns such as Poole, Weymouth, and Bridport, arriving Lyme Regis. From Lyme Regis, the players travelled further west to Exeter, and then turned north, possibly visiting Bridgwater and Wells, and then to Bristol. And from Bristol, they could have either gone straight back to London by pursuing the eastward road (passing Bath, if they liked, Marlborough and Reading),

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<sup>100</sup> The company was at Lydd in 1539-40 as well. But no other reference could support a more complete tour in the year.

or gone further north to Gloucester (as they did in the following years), and then returned to their mistress's household.

In 1561-3, the troupe took a similar but slightly different touring pattern. Again, departing from London they went to Southampton. But instead of taking their journey further west as they did in the previous year, they possibly turned north-west, passing Salisbury, to Bristol. From Bristol, they travelled northward, possibly stopping at Thornbury, and then to Gloucester. No information suggests that they went further north to Worcester, so they probably began their return journey to London, which would have led them to towns such as Burford, Woodstock and Oxford.

Another important circuit taken by the troupe was the East Anglia tour, which consisted of major towns in Cambridgeshire, Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk. Again, we have only scattered records of the company's touring this circuit during the duke's period. We know that the duke of Suffolk's players were at Cambridge in both 1537-8 and 1538-9. But no further information is available supporting further arguments. In 1558-9, the company, under the duchess's patronage, began to tour beyond Cambridge and were at Norwich that year. From 1561 onwards to 1564, the troupe toured the East Anglia circuit at least twice. They were at Cambridge in 1561-2, Ipswich and Maldon in 1562. The second tour seems to have begun in 1562-3. They were at Ipswich that year,<sup>101</sup> and then at Maldon and Chelmsford in 1564. The two

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<sup>101</sup> Two entries of the troupe's performance were recorded in Ipswich, one dated as 28 May and the other as 8 October. It is not likely that the two visits belonged to the same touring, for there is no distinct reason for the troupe to stay at one location for more than four months. But unfortunately no evidence is given for further speculation.

travels of the company are quite suggestive; a possible touring pattern to East Anglia comes into view. Taking London as their base, they first went northward to Cambridge, then turned north-east, passing Norfolk towns, such as Thetford and Kenninghall, to Norwich. From Norwich, they further pursued the direction to the seafront town, Great Yarmouth, and then turned south. Passing Ipswich, and possibly Boxford, Stoke-by-Nayland, Dunmow and Harwich, they then arrived in Maldon and later in Chelmsford. On their trip back to London from Chelmsford, they could pass by Ingatestone Hall, home of Sir William Petre.

The last major route taken by the Suffolk's player was the northern circuit. It is more difficult to find a pattern for the troupe's northern touring. In 1540, the Suffolk's players were at York, in 1560-1 at Leicester, in 1562 at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and in 1562, 1562-3, and 1564 at Beverley. As the York entry is isolated from the rest, not much can be deduced from the record. The 1560-2 touring is more suggestive: the company, either embarking from London or from Grimsthorpe, possibly first visited Leicester and then travelled north, passing important locations, such as Nottingham, Doncaster, and then to Newcastle. As Beverley was not on the road connecting Leicester and Newcastle and there was no direct route adjoining Beverley to either location, it is difficult to tell how the company combined their visit to Leicester and Newcastle with that to Beverley. But since in the middle of their journey, they could turn east taking the road leading to York, passing Londesborough, then to Beverley, it is very likely that the troupe incorporated Beverley into their 1560-2 trip. Beverley seems to have welcome the Suffolk's troupe very much, for it visited the town repeatedly in the following two years, 1562-3 and 1564. Apart from locations on these four major circuits, there are several isolated

ones which were visited by the troupe; they are Cromwell's household in London (22 January, 1538), Hampton Court (6 January, 1540-1), Long Sutton (1550-1), and Peterborough (1548-9).

If we examine the touring patterns of Suffolk's players, we find that the duchess's exile was a watershed. During the duke's period, the Kentish circuit was the only major route that the company frequently took and this custom persisted until 1553, the end of the first phase of the company. This consistency of the company's touring pattern, as mentioned above, suggests that the duke of Suffolk's players continued to serve the Brandon household after the master's death, only this time carrying the title of their mistress.

The touring of the Suffolk's players was suspended during Mary's time, when the duchess was in exile. As a consequence of religious prosecution, the Suffolk estates were confiscated and the household dissolved. It is thus very likely that the 'old' Suffolk's players were accordingly disbanded. When the duchess returned to England and had her properties reinstated, she reassembled an acting company of her own. Unfortunately, we do not know much about the composition of the new troupe and therefore are unable to tell whether members of the former Suffolk's men were recruited. But what is explicit is that this 'new' company toured in a very different way from the former one. They no longer confined themselves to the conventional Kentish circuit, but travelled much wider and more frequently; apart from Kentist tour, they also toured the western, East Anglia, and northern circuits.

Why did the company exhibit such different characteristics in the two phases?



An investigation of their touring motive may give us the answer. Profit seems to be the major reason for the touring of Suffolk's men in the first period. Brandon was a man without strong religious commitment,<sup>102</sup> and the Kentish circuit was at that time a profitable route popular with itinerant performers. It is therefore reasonable to assume that no special duty was bestowed by their master to the performers and the players travelled only to earn their livings. This however is less likely to be the case for the company's touring in the second phase. As mentioned above, Katherine returned from the continent a fervent Protestant; she harboured great hopes for the new queen,<sup>103</sup> and was eager to promote her religious cause.<sup>104</sup> Livery players, who travelled to various corners of the country, certainly presented a convenient tool for the duchess. In fact, if we trace back the history of Katherine's players, it appears that the duchess might have begun her propagandist campaign from as early as 1548.

In the last phase of Henry VIII's reign, the king returned to more a conservative religious attitude and fanatical reformation pursuits were forbidden, or even prosecuted.<sup>105</sup> When the Protestant prince Edward came to the throne, feverish religious reformers considered it a good chance to promote their cause and Katherine was one of them. Soon after the coronation of the young king, she started her work for religious reform in her own county, Lincolnshire. John Strype remarked that the advancement of the new religion in the county was greatly attributed to the 'helping

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<sup>102</sup> W.K. Jordan says Brandon died 'a moderate Catholic.' See his Edward VI: The Young King (London, 1968), p.149.

<sup>103</sup> See her letter to Elizabeth above.

<sup>104</sup> See, for example, her letter to Cecil on 4 March 1559 above.

<sup>105</sup> As Sydney Anglo points out, the execution of Cromwell in July 1540 marked the failure of the Protestant campaign. See Anglo, Spectacle, Pageantry, and Early Tudor Policy, p.270.

forwardness of that devout woman of God, the duchess of Suffolk.’<sup>106</sup> He described Katherine as

‘very active in seconding the efforts of government to abolish superfluous Holy Days, to remove images and relics from churches, to destroy shrines and other monuments of idolatry and superstition, to put an end to pilgrimages, to reform the clergy, to see that every church had provided, in some convenient place, a copy of the large Bible, to stir up the Bishops, Vicars and Curates to diligence in preaching against the usurped authority of the Pope; in including upon all the reading of the Scriptures and especially the young, the Pater Noster, the Articles of Faith and the Ten Commandments in English.’<sup>107</sup>

During the same period of time, we find that players wearing the duchess’s livery visited two locations near her household at Grimsthorpe—Peterborough (1548-9) and Long Sutton (1550-1). As Katherine was, as Strype described, active in the advancement of the new religion in her home county, and as the two locations visited by the players were unprecedented in the company’s touring pattern, it is very possible that these two visited were part of the ‘reformation scheme’ harboured by the duchess for Lincolnshire and probably for the adjoining counties as well.

If our speculation about the purpose of the Suffolk’s players’ visiting Peterborough and Long Sutton at the early phase of Edward’s reign can be accepted, then we can surmise that the duchess, returning from her religious exile, reapplied the method, on a even larger scale. This hypothesis in fact can very much explain the different travelling pattern taken by the Suffolk’s company in the second phase of their career. To promote religious teachings, a troupe would not only extend their touring to the more profitable circuit, but also visit those less popular ones. And this

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<sup>106</sup> John Strype, Ecclesiastical Memorials, Relating Chiefly to Religion, and the Reformation of it, and the Emergencies of the Church of England under King Henry VIII, King Edward VI, and Queen Mary I, 3 vols. (Oxford, 1822), vol.2, pt.1, p.83.

<sup>107</sup> Read, Catherine, Duchess of Suffolk, pp.66-7. Goff, A Woman of the Tudor Age, p.178.

propagandist duty given by the duchess was why the troupe went beyond their conventional Kentish tour, venturing onto almost all the remaining major circuits of the time within a period of six years. Unfortunately, this is all we can gather about the performance of the duchess of Suffolk's players. There is no information about the repertory they carried.

### **iii. Conclusion**

Cromwell's patronage of propagandists and polemical troupes show that contemporary concerns were not groundless; the minister, with the aids of his literary clients, launched a wide-scale persuasion campaign. Following Cromwell's example, many Protestant patrons also employed their livery companies to promote their faiths. In order to convey the religious message to the very corners of the realm, propagandist companies, withdrawing from their familiar areas, ventured to the 'unconverted' regions. Religion was the major concern of patrons in the pre-Marian period. During the reign of the Catholic Queen, such pro-Protestant advertising was strictly controlled. Religious polemics soon revived when Elizabeth came to the throne and with the propagandist experience of the earlier period, other issues were brought into the campaign of persuasion in the reign of the last Tudor.

## Chapter 5: Propagandist Acting Companies (2)

As Norman Jones points out, for English people, the 1550s were not a happy time. Food shortage, disease, crime, unemployment and a poor business climate was added to the uncertainty of an ever-changing government. When Queen Mary died on 17 November 1558, her passing meant more political and religious confusion for many.<sup>1</sup> The problems inherited from the previous regime made it clear that the 1560s would be a difficult time for the new queen. Elizabeth met with two major problems.

The first one was religion. Ever since the Reformation, England had experienced religious controversies and when Elizabeth came to the throne, she faced the same sensitive issue as her predecessors. As the daughter of the Protestant Anne Boleyn, most English people believed that the new queen would once again change the national religion. This brought both worries and hopes: on the one hand, Protestants would no longer be burned, but on the other, Catholics might be executed. The religion of the new regime would not only decide the legitimate faith within the realm, but also England's relationship with her neighbours. Returning to Protestantism, for instance, would mean the termination of England's alliance with Spain, which also implied a possible Scottish or even Spanish invasion.

The succession settlement was another major concern of contemporaries. Ever since the establishment of the Tudor regime, the monarchy, as Mortimer Levine asserts, had been plagued in one way or another by the question of the succession. Henry VIII, the most indisputably lawful English sovereign since Richard II,

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<sup>1</sup> Norman Jones, The Birth of the Elizabethan Age: England in the 1560s (Oxford, 1993), p.4.

denounced his matrimonial vows mainly for a son;<sup>2</sup> whereas Edward dying without generating an undisputed heir drew the country to the edge of a civil war. To produce an irrefutable heir, Elizabeth had to marry and give birth to a child. Her marriage, however, was far from a simple issue. As Mary's example shows, a queen would go to war on her husband's behalf, and thus the husband of Elizabeth could therefore decide England's future, in peace or in war.<sup>3</sup>

As shown in William Lambarde's speech in House of the Commons, the succession question seriously disturbed contemporaries.

'If God should take her Majestie, the succession/ being not established, I know not what shall become of my self, my wife, children, landes, goodes, friendes or cuntrie; for in truth, noe man doth know what.'<sup>4</sup>

William Cecil's words reveal the wishes of most English people in the early years of Elizabeth's reign:

'God send our mistress a husband, and by him a son, that we may hope our posterity shall have a masculine succession. This matter is too big for weak folks and too deep for simple.'<sup>5</sup>

Religion had, from Cromwell's time onwards, become a major subject for persuasion and polemic. The two issues faced specifically by the Elizabethans, the royal marriage and the succession, had made them apply their polemical skills to temporal affairs. Acting companies, again, were given responsibility in this rekindled

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<sup>2</sup> Mortimer Levine, The Early Elizabethan Succession Question, 1558-1668 (California, 1966), p.5. See also his chapter 1 for more detailed discussion of the background of the question.

<sup>3</sup> Jones, The Birth of the Elizabethan Age, pp.4-5.

<sup>4</sup> T.E. Hartley (ed.), Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I, p.138. Cf. Jones, ibid., p.148.

<sup>5</sup> The passage is in Cecil's letter to the English ambassador in France. Cited in Jones, ibid., p.15.

propagandist campaign. In this chapter, three patrons, who pretty much represented the polemical patronage of the time, are given detailed investigation. William Cecil, the first minister of Elizabeth, played a similar role to his earlier counterpart, Thomas Cromwell. He was the man behind the new campaign, but employed tacit and indirect methods to avoid open attacks from his enemies. Francis Russell, the second earl of Bedford, was an ardent Protestant. His application of livery players to advance his faith confirms the general argument that acting companies again were employed for religious propaganda. Robert Dudley, the earl of Leicester, was the most important Elizabethan patron of drama and also the leading English candidate for the royal marriage. His tarnished family reputation and high expectation of the Queen's hand had given him manifold reasons to sponsor a livery troupe. Evidence shows that the earl applied all his resources, including drama, to promote his cause. Dudley's patronage, though an individual case, provides a good example of the contribution of players to temporal issues.

### **i. William Cecil and His Religious Propagandist Campaign**

Like most noblemen of the time, William Cecil, Lord Burghley, kept his own acting troupe. The Bailiffs' and Chamberlains' accounts of Ludlow (Shropshire) show that on 1 December 1580-1, 'by consent of Mr Blashefeld Mr Poghnill Mr Partritch and others', 'my lord Burley his players' were rewarded a moderate payment of 6s 8d.<sup>6</sup> This however is the only record of Burghley's company that is known, which suggests that the secretary's troupe was not very active compared to others.

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<sup>6</sup> J. Alan B. Somerset (ed.), Records of Early English Drama. Shropshire (London, c.1994), p.85.

Although Cecil appears to be reluctant in 'direct' patronage of travelling companies, he was nonetheless not unaware of the value of drama and players in propagandist campaigns. Various evidences show that the revival of anti-papal entertainments in the early years of Elizabeth's reign was in fact part of a nationwide propaganda programme encouraged, or even organised, by Cecil.<sup>7</sup> In his letter to King Philip of Spain dated 29 April 1559, for instance, the Duke of Feria, the Spanish ambassador, made a clear comment:

'She [the Queen] was very emphatic in saying that she wished to punish severely certain persons who had represented some comedies in which your Majesty was taken off. I passed it by, and said that these were matter of less importance than the others, although both in jest and earnest more respect ought to be paid to so great a prince as your Majesty, and I knew that a member of her Council had given the arguments to construct these comedies, which is true, for Cecil gave them, as indeed she partly admitted to me.'<sup>8</sup>

The anti-Catholic demonstrations were also observed by Il Schifanoia, a Mantuan resident in London. In his letter to Castellan of Mantua dated 11 April 1559, Schifanoia asserted that 'the performance in the hostels and taverns of certain plays and games on holidays...used to be held in abuse and derision of the Catholic religion, of the mass, of the Saints, and finally of God.'<sup>9</sup> Letters of Feria and Schifanoia, though give us some hint of the essence of the performance, but do not provide us with more details of the contents. Fortunately, this defect is supplemented by the Venetian ambassador's letter. In his report to the Doge and Senate dated 4 May 1559, Paulo Tiepolo described the London plays:

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<sup>7</sup> See White, Theatre and Reformation: Protestantism, Patronage, and Playing in Tudor England (Cambridge, 1993), p.58.

<sup>8</sup> M.A.S. Hume (ed.), Calendar of State Papers, Spanish, Elizabeth, 4 vols (London, 1892-9), vol.1, p.62. Cf. E.K. Chambers, The Elizabethan Stag, 4 vols. (Oxford, 1923), vol.1, p.244.

<sup>9</sup> Rowden Brown (ed.), Calendar of State Papers, Venetian, 9 vols (London, 1864-98), vol.7, p.65.

‘they brought upon the stage all personages whom they wished to revile, however exalted their station, and amongst the rest, in one play, they represented King Philip, the late Queen of England, and Cardinal Pole, reasoning together about such things as they imagined might have been said by them in the matter of religion; so that they did not spare any living person, saying whatever they fancied about them.’<sup>10</sup>

The Spanish ambassador’s protest to the Queen proved not in vain, for in the same report, Tiepolo mentioned that ‘the demonstrations and performance of plays by the London populace in the hostels and taverns, which as written by me had been prohibited by the Queen’, although, according to the ambassador’s opinion, the plays were so ‘vituperative and abominable that it was marvellous they should so long have been tolerated.’<sup>11</sup> Elizabeth’s prohibition however could have been merely a diplomatic gesture, for, despite the proclamation, which may not have been strictly enforced, the governmental policy towards polemical players remained obscure, and most important of all, the organiser behind the whole propaganda campaign, William Cecil, was free from any punishment or even reproach.<sup>12</sup>

The 1559 London incident reveals that Cecil was not innocent of Elizabethan anti-Catholic propaganda. It is also a good example of Cecil’s method in promoting the religious cause. Like his patronage of players, the Secretary was cautious not to be involved directly in the campaign; he encouraged the propaganda, but always remained a man behind the scene. This was Cecil’s style.

Cecil’s prudence in propagandist patronage makes it difficult for us to find

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.80-1.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.80-1. Cf. pp.65, 71.

<sup>12</sup> The relationship between Tudor government and polemical drama is a complicated one. For more detailed discussion, see chapter 6.



direct evidence for his involvement in the campaign. Some less conspicuous cases however do suggest that the Secretary might have had a hand in those anti-papal performances. One example is the Cambridge play performed before the Queen in 1564. Elizabeth's proposed visit to Cambridge was officially notified by Cecil in his letter dated 12 July to Edward Hawford, the Vice-Chancellor of the University. Three days later, Bishop Grindal of London admonished the university authorities 'to put them selves in all redynes to pleasure her Maiestie and to welcome Her with all maner of Scholasticall exercises', including 'playng of Comedies and tragedies.'<sup>13</sup> The Queen entered the town on the afternoon of Saturday, August 5, and after being received with great state, arranged to take a rest at her residence at the Provost of King's Lodge. No acting took place that evening, but from Sunday night on, a series of performances was arranged in honour of the royal visit.<sup>14</sup>

According to the report of Guzman de Silva, the Spanish ambassador, the University presented to the Queen

'comedies and held scientific disputations, and an argument on religion, in which the man who defended Catholicism was attacked by those who presided, in order to avoid having to give him the prize.'

Elizabeth apparently quite enjoyed the performance, for 'the Queen made a speech praising the acts and exercises.'<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Alan H. Nelson (ed.), REED, Cambridge, (London, c.1989), p.232. Cf Frederick S. Boas, University Drama in the Tudor Age (Oxford, 1914), pp.90-1.

<sup>14</sup> For more about the performances provided by the University, see Boas, ibid., pp.92-97.

<sup>15</sup> Guzman de Silva's letter to the Duchess of Parma dated 19 August 1564. In CSP, Spanish, Elizabeth, vol.1, p.375.

The scholars of the University planned to perform another play for the Queen on the following day, which was the last one of Elizabeth's visit. But at the close of the following day, the Queen was too exhausted to be present at the performance that had been arranged.<sup>16</sup> And as she did not wish to delay her following schedule, the play prepared for the last day of Elizabeth's visit had to be cancelled. The cancellation certainly was a 'greate sorowe not onely of ye players, but of all ye whole vniuersitie.'<sup>17</sup> In fact, the players were so anxious for the Queen to hear the play, they 'followed to her first stopping-place', Hinchinbrooke Priory.<sup>18</sup>

The queen finally consented to see the play and it was therefore performed on the night of August 10 at the priory. De Silva's letter to the Duchess of Parma mentioned above contains a remarkable account of the performance.

'The actors came in dressed as some of the imprisoned Bishops. First came the bishop of London carrying a lamb in his hands as if he were eating it as he walked along, and then other with different devices, one being in the figure of a dog with the Host in his mouth.'

This burlesque of the imprisoned bishops apparently irritated Elizabeth, for de Silva reported,

'the Queen was so angry that she at once entered her chamber using strong language, and the men who held the torches, it being night, left them in the dark, and so ended the thoughtless and scandalous representation'<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> REED, Cambridge, p.231.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p.235.

<sup>18</sup> CSP, Spanish, Elizabeth, vol.1, p.375. REED, Cambridge, p.235. Boas, University Drama, p.97. Hinchinbrook Priory, about 12 miles from Cambridge in Huntingdonshire, was the seat of Sir Henry Cromwell, grandfather of the Protector, Oliver Cromwell. Elizabeth had arranged to spend the night of August 10 there. See Boas, ibid., p.383. REED, Cambridge, p.235.

<sup>19</sup> CSP, Spanish, Elizabeth, vol.1, p.375.

According to F. Boas, the burlesque of the imprisoned bishops was unlikely the one prepared by the University authorities, for, according to the detailed statements of Matthew Stokys, the University Register, and Nicholas Robinson, it was a Latin tragedy written by Sophocles entitled *Ajax Flagellifer* that was chosen for the last evening of the queen's visit.<sup>20</sup> Besides, as some figures of the University authority, such as Dr Thomas Legge, were Romanist sympathisers, it was unlikely that they would have sanctioned such a ribald production as part of the official programme for Elizabeth's entertainment. Boas therefore argues that the burlesque was an unauthorised addition by some of the younger scholars, who followed the queen to Hinchinbrook, in order to perform the play and that the Spanish ambassador mistook it for the play that had been cancelled on the evening of 9 August.<sup>21</sup>

The anti-papal messages of the Cambridge burlesque were apparent enough, and provide more evidence of the religious propagandist campaign. However, what is more interesting for our present concern is the possible link between Cecil and this performance. Scholars like Paul White suspect that this unofficial satire was in fact not 'unauthorised'; Cecil could have been the man behind the scene. As Chancellor of the University, Cecil went up to Cambridge a few days before the queen's arrival to discuss with a committee of administrators the sermons, debates, and plays that would be suitable for the queen's presence.<sup>22</sup> And the Secretary clearly was not opposed to performance with specific religious messages. One of the plays approved,

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<sup>20</sup> REED, *Cambridge*, pp.231, 235.

<sup>21</sup> Boas, *University Drama*, pp.382, 384.

<sup>22</sup> REED, *Cambridge*, p.230.

for instance, was Nicholas Udall's *Ezechias*.<sup>23</sup> Nicholas Robinson, a scholar of Queen's college, witnessed the play, recording the performance of that night.

'This night showed that heroic deed of Hezekiah at the time when he, inflamed with zeal for the divine honour, shattered the brazen image of the serpent. From this holy source Nicholas Udall drew off just as much as he thought sufficient to the true stature of (his) comedy, and he put all of it into English rhythmic prose, and called it by Hezekiah's name.'<sup>24</sup>

As Robinson's account shows, *Exekiasi* is an openly iconoclastic work. King Hezekiah sweeps aside superstition and idolatry to make way for genuine religious worship.<sup>25</sup> Although there is no direct evidence showing that Cecil ordered the production of the burlesque, his tolerance towards, if not encouragement of, propagandist drama, as shown in his approval of Udall's play, and his style of indirect patronage, as shown in the London anti-papal performances, make it reasonable to suspect the young Protestant scholars composed the satire under the encouragement, if not instruction, of the Chancellor.

Apart from the royal visit to Cambridge in 1564, a Star Chamber case from a later period also illustrates that Cecil envisaged the possibility of utilising the stage. In June 1596, one Howe, a broker, and one Easte, a solicitor, were accused of the 'cozening of young gentlemen.' They were found guilty and were subsequently fined, whipped and set up in the pillory at Westminster. In the course of the trial,

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<sup>23</sup> The three plays performed on the evenings of August 6, 7, and 8 respectively were Plautus's *Aulularia*, Edward Halliwell's *Dido*, and Udall's *Ezechias*. See *ibid.*, pp.142-6. Cf. White, *Theatre and Reformation*, p.142.

<sup>24</sup> REED, *Cambridge*, pp.1137-8.

<sup>25</sup> The text of the interlude *Ezechias* does not survive. Abraham Hartwell's eyewitness account of the performance in verse makes it possible for us to reconstruct the plot of the play. See *ibid.*, pp.1140-1. Cf. White, *Theatre and Reformation*, pp.107, 143, 145.

Cecil, then Lord Treasurer, stated that ‘he would haue those [tha]t make playes to make a comedie hereof, & to acte it with these names.’<sup>26</sup> The Secretary’s comments shows that he was not unfamiliar with providing ‘interesting topics’ for playwrights.

Although various evidence suggests that Cecil was not unaware of the power of drama as a tool of communication and persuasion, his reluctant style of patronage makes it difficult for us to provide a more complete picture of his use of drama for propaganda. Cecil’s prudence was not typical, for most Tudor noblemen found drama a safe weapon to adopt, and few of them felt it necessary to conceal their connection with propagandist troupes. In the following discussion, the patronage of one fervent Protestant patron—Francis, earl of Bedford—will be investigated. We shall reveal how an Elizabethan nobleman used his family troupe to promote the religious cause.

## **ii. The Russells, Earls of Bedford, and their Political and Religious Propaganda**

Francis, the second earl of Bedford, born in around 1527, was the only son of John Russell, the first earl created by Henry VIII. Francis was an ardent Protestant.<sup>27</sup> In his letter to Philip II, the Spanish ambassador, Count de Feria, had once called Cecil and Bedford as the two members of the Council ‘who are foremost in upsetting

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<sup>26</sup> Conyers Read, ‘William Cecil and Elizabethan Public Relations’, in S.T. Bindoff, J. Hurstfield, and C.H. Williams (eds.), Elizabethan Government and Society: Essays Presented to Sir John Neal (London, 1961), pp.27-8. White, Theatre and Reformation, p.59, n.59. Chambers, ES, vol.1, p.267 n.4.

<sup>27</sup> Russell’s deep interest in reformed theology is revealed in his library, which consisted very largely of religious books, including works of Calvin and Beza as well as the writings of most of the prominent English puritan figures. See Patrick Collinson, The Elizabethan Puritan Movement (London, 1967), p.53.

things.’<sup>28</sup> Like most Protestant peers of the time, Russell also applied his patronage to promote the new religion. Patrick Collinson calls Russell, who was the patron of those closely interrelated western families, ‘the mainstay of protestantism in the West Country’.<sup>29</sup> H.P.R. Finberg also argues that, after being appointed lord lieutenant of Devon, Cronwall, and Dorset in 1558, Russell ‘threw all his influence into the puritan scale’. Under Russell’s authority, John Jewel, a Devonshire-born bishop, carried out a purge of the cathedral chapter, and Catholic dean, sub-dean, and treasurer were all deposed.<sup>30</sup>

Russell’s support for Protestantism, nevertheless, was more than provincial. Nicolas des Gallars, a close colleague of Calvin, called him ‘the most powerful and most noble earl’, a great source of comfort.<sup>31</sup> In fact, Russell’s exile during Mary’s time made him acquainted with continental reformers. He had spent a Marian winter at Zürich and in Elizabeth’s reign, he continued to correspond with these continental friends and with Calvin himself.<sup>32</sup> Some of his foreign Protestant friends had come to England, probably with Russell’s help, seeking sanctuary and employment upon

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<sup>28</sup> CSP, Spanish, Elizabeth, vol.1, p.25. Cf. H.P.R. Finberg, ‘A Chapter of Religious History’, in W.G. Hoskins and H.P.R. Finberg (eds.), Devonshire Studies (London, 1952), p.367. Henry Norbert Birt, The Elizabethan Religious Settlement (London, 1907), p.47. Cf. Leslie Stephen and Sidney Lee (eds.), Dictionary of National Biography, 63 with supplementary volumes (London, 1885- ), vol.17, p.432.

<sup>29</sup> Collinson, Elizabethan Puritan Movement, p.52.

<sup>30</sup> James Turberville, the last catholic bishop of Exeter, for instance, was removed from his see, his place taken by William Alley, a man close to Bedford. See Finberg, ‘A Chapter of Religious History’, p.367. Cf. Birt, The Elizabethan Religious Settlement, p.177.

<sup>31</sup> Collinson, Elizabethan Puritan Movement, p.53.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., pp.52-3.

Elizabeth's accession.<sup>33</sup> And eminent Reformation figures, such as John Knox, and pamphleteers, such as Gerooge Gascoigne, dedicated works to him.<sup>34</sup>

Russell's religious devotion not only made him an important sponsor for Protestants, but probably also made him find means to disseminate the new religion earnestly. One of the instruments that Russell found convenient was travelling players. To understand the possible propagandist obligation bestowed on Francis's company, it is necessary to have an overview of the patronage of players by the Russell family. The Russells's patronage of players can be traced back to Francis's father, John the first earl. John was created Baron Russell in 1539 and his company began to tour the country either under the title of Lord Russell's or Lord Admiral's players.<sup>35</sup> In the year 1540-1, Russell's players toured part of the south-western circuit: Bristol, Bridgwater, and Plymouth. There is no record of their touring in the following two years. When they reappeared, it was in 1543-4 when they were rewarded as 'Lorde pryvye seales players' at Cambridge.<sup>36</sup> The Cambridge entry is isolated, for they again disappear from our data in the following two years. It is not until 1546-7 that we retrace their activity. In that year, they performed at two Devon towns, Barnstaple and Plymouth. and then returned to the latter in the following year. After 1547-8, the company seems to have shifted its interest to a more northerly

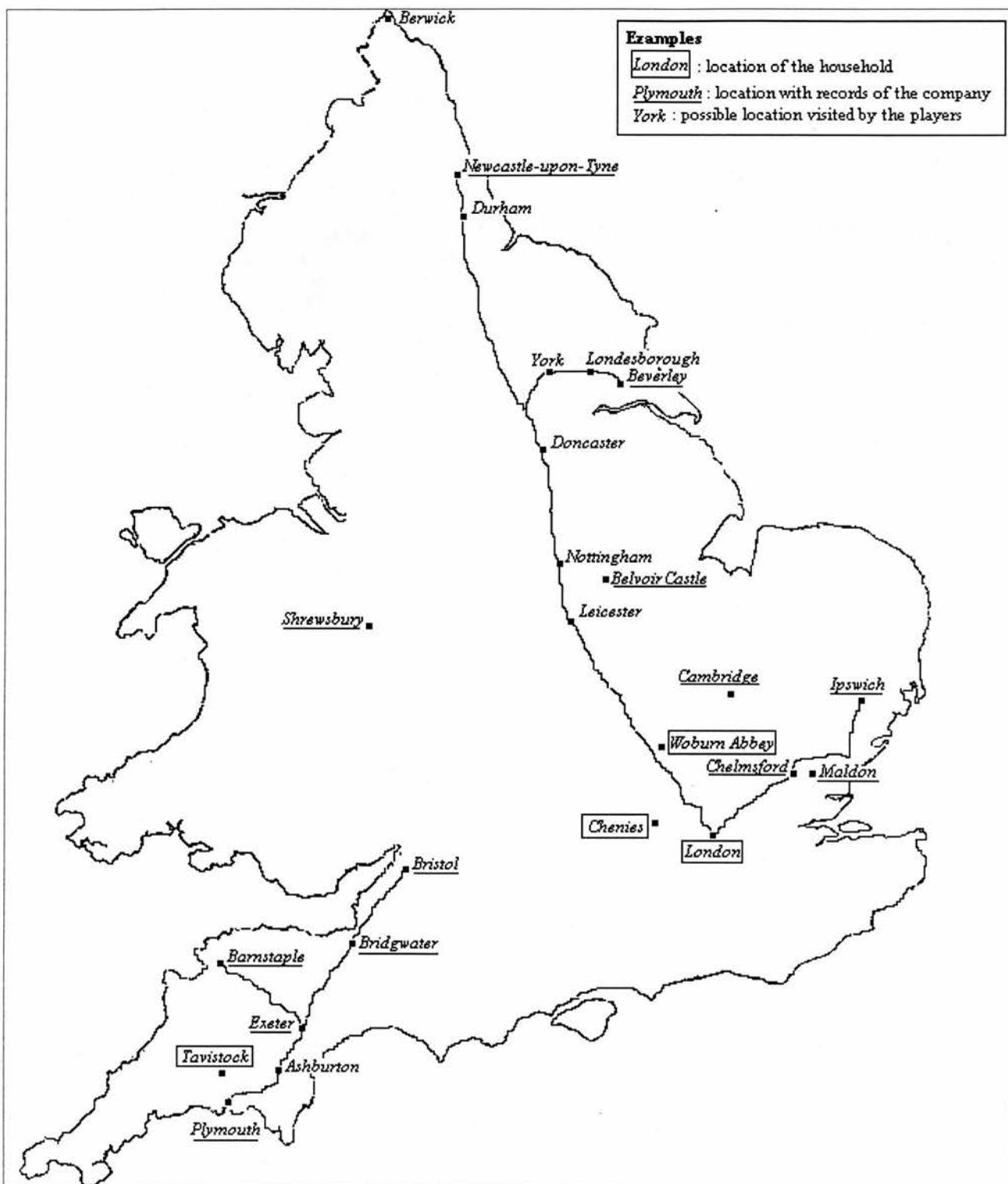
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<sup>33</sup> One example is Giacomo Concio (Jacobus Acontius). Concio was an Italian Protestant refugee. He probably had become acquainted with Russell during the latter's exile in the continent. In the end of 1559, Concio was granted permission and settled in England, and probably had helped Russell in fortification of Berwick in around 1563-4. See Eleanor Rosenberg, *Leicester: Patron of Letters* (New York, 1955), p.54.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.27, 167, 170.

<sup>35</sup> John was made Lord High Admiral on 28 July 1540.

<sup>36</sup> John became lord keeper of the privy seal on 3 December 1542.



Map 5: The Touring of the Earl of Bedford's Players



town—Shrewsbury—and was rewarded there in 1548-9.<sup>37</sup>

John died on 14 March 1555, but his company ceased to appear in our records after 1549. Nevertheless, the Russells did not suspend their patronage of players. In the year 1552-3, a 'new' company under the title of 'Lord Russell's players' began to tour the country. They were rewarded 10s at Belvoir Castle (by the Manners family) on 30 December 1552 and at Shrewsbury and Barnstaple in 1552-3.<sup>38</sup> No more records are available about the Russell's troupe before the death of the first earl. When we see it again, it was in 1557-8 at Exeter (10 October) when it was titled Lord Bedford's players. Francis's players were not active after this reappearance; nothing is known of them between 1559-63. In 1564, the troupe, however, was 'exceptionally' active: they took at least two major circuits. They were at Ipswich (4 April), Maldon and Chelmsford (East Anglia tour) and visited Beverley and Newcastle (July) of the same year (northern tour).<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> John M. Wasson (ed.), REED, Devon (Toronto, London, c.1986), pp.40, 229, 232, Mark C. Pilkinton (ed.), REED, Bristol (Toronto, London, c.1997), p.51; James Stokes and Robert J. Alexander (eds.), REED, Somerset (including Bath) (Toronto, 1996), pp. 44, 45, REED, Cambridge, p.130, and REED, Shropshire, p.201.

<sup>38</sup> The record at Shrewsbury was allocated by the REED editor of Shropshire as belonging to John's company. But the Barnstaple one of the same year allocated by the Devon editor to Francis's. It is reasonable to assume that the two entries belong to the same patron. As John was created earl of Bedford on 19 January 1550 and his son Francis was styled Lord Russell (he was later summoned to Parliament on 1 March 1553 as Lord Russell). Besides, John's company was rewarded in Shrewsbury as 'Lord Privy Seal's interluders' in 1548-9; there is no reason to assume that the town would have changed the title of the company to 'Lord Russell's interluders' in 1552-3, should the master remained the same. See REED, Shropshire, pp.201, 203. Also the 'patron list' of REED, Devon and REED, Shropshire. DNB, vol.17, p.432.

<sup>39</sup> REED, Devon, pp.41, 147-8; J.J. Anderson (ed.), REED, Newcastle-upon-Tyne (Toronto, [Manchester], c.1982), p.38; Diana Wyatt (ed.), 'Beverley' (forthcoming), Historical Manuscripts Commission, Rutland, (London, 1905), vol.4, p.372, Malone Collection, vol.2, pt. 3 (1931), p.263. John C. Coldewey, 'Early Essex Drama: A History of its Rise and Fall, and a Theory Concerning the Digby Plays' (unpublished Ph.D dissertation of University of Colorado, 1972), pp.130, 278; Notes and Queries, 10th ser., 7 (1907), p.422. See also appendix 6 for the complete touring data and the map 4 for their routes.

In many respects, Russell family's patronage of players was not exceptional: it was a family troupe, which passed from the father's hand to the son's, and carried the title of their master. The transfer of the patrons from the first earl to the second apparently took place by 1552-3, and though we do not know whether the members of the company remained the same, the consistency of touring pattern around the period suggests that no drastic change had happened to the company.

The Russell's troupe, however, in many ways, shows that it was more than a traditional noble company; their changing of touring habit in the mid-1560s suggests that they might carry propaganda for their master. The touring of the Russell's players can be divided into two phases, with 1564 as the watershed. Before that year, the company was very much based in the Western Country;<sup>40</sup> they performed in various Devon towns and extended their travelling as far north as Shrewsbury, but in 1564, they abandoned their customary touring and ventured to the less familiar eastern and northern routes.

The concentration in the Western Country of Russell's players is understandable, for the Russell's family was very much a western-based one. Apart from their estates near the capital,<sup>41</sup> Devon, the most important county in the Western Country, was the major area of their family influence.<sup>42</sup> During the

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<sup>40</sup> The two exceptions were their visit of Cambridge in 1543-4, and the Belvoir Castle in 1552.

<sup>41</sup> These included the Russell House at Strand (Middlesex), Chenies (Buckinghamshire), and Woburn Abbey (Bedfordshire). See Map 4.

<sup>42</sup> Diane Willen points out that Devon, Cornwall, Somerset, and Dorset together comprised the Tudor West, but Devon was the most important of the country. See her John Russell, First Earl of Bedford: One of the King's Men (London, 1981), p.62 n.1.

Dissolution, the Russells acquired the estates of Tavistock Abbey, which became their family seat in Devon, and through Tavistock, they extended the family influence to adjacent locales such as Plymouth and Exeter, and to Barnstaple in the far north-west of the county.

The Russell's patronage of players in the first phase very much reflected their needs to establish their influence in the western counties. As Diane Willen points out, the tenuous control over remote regions was a persistent problem for Tudor monarchs; they had to depend on reliable regional magnates to secure the peace of the area. In the first three decades of Henry VIII's reign, it was the king's cousin Henry Courtenay, Marquis of Exeter, that was responsible for supervising the region. However, the execution of Courtenay in 1538 made a vacancy of noble power in the area and it was the Russells that Henry chose to fill the vacuum.<sup>43</sup> In 1539, John Russell inherited most of Courtenay's lands and offices, which ensured his leading position in the region.<sup>44</sup> A major reason for Russell's promotion was that Henry needed him to fortify royal control over the area. To fulfil his duty, Russell therefore adopted various methods, and one of them was to reinforce his connection with local people, most importantly the gentry.<sup>45</sup> Retaining a livery company was very possibly

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<sup>43</sup> The Russells had some ties to the west from the earl's family origin, his Dorset patrimony, and his commission as sheriff for Dorset and Somerset in 1528. See Willen, *ibid.*, p.65. Cf. Gladys Scott Thomson, Two Centuries of Family History: A Study in Social Development (London, 1930), pp.144-6, 148-54.

<sup>44</sup> Joyce Youings points out that the only peers with sizeable holdings in Devon, the earl of Bath and the Marquis of Dorset, had their primary interests elsewhere. In fact, after the execution of Courtenay, the houses of Russell and Bouchier had become the only two noble families residing in Devon. See Willen, *ibid.*, p.62. REED, Devon, xii. Eugene A. Andriette, Devon and Exeter in the Civil War (Newton Abbot, 1971), p.16. Cf. Joyce Youings, Devon Monastic Lands: Calendar of Particulars for Grants 1536-1558, Devon & Cornwall Record Society, ns., vol.1 (1955), xxvi.

<sup>45</sup> See Willen, p.62. Russell's early attempt appears to be successful. Gladys Scott Thomas, for instance, remarks that after 1539, Russell's authority in the west was 'almost regal.' Willen, *ibid.*,

part of Russell's scheme; players, strolling from town to town, were one of the best means of making their master known to the local society.

John Russell began to retain his own livery players soon after he inherited Courtenay's place in the region. Russell's players started to tour the provinces in 1540-1, and in that year, they travelled from Plymouth as far as Bristol. John's patronage of players terminated in 1548-9; it is not until 1552-3 that we see Russell's players reappearing in the touring business under Francis's title. The interruption of the Russell's patronage in 1549 probably was a consequence of the West Uprising of the same year, which took Russell almost three months to suppress. After the rising, as D. Willen points out, the earl realised the limits of his own authority and the independence of the lower classes; he gave up his former strategy, utilising the office of lord lieutenant to strengthen his control.<sup>46</sup> Russell's abandoning of his old ruling policy in 1549 probably explains the end of his enthusiasm for drama in the same year: as he no longer needed to reinforce his link with the area in a more indirect way, the means to achieve this aim, players, were not needed anymore.<sup>47</sup>

Francis took charge of the patronage of players by 1552. In the early stage of Francis's period, the players seem to have resumed their former touring habits without much alteration.<sup>48</sup> Mary's reign caused the interruption of Francis's

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p.63. Thomson, *Two Centuries of Family History*, pp.163-4. Russell seems to establish a good relationship with the eastern gentry quite successfully. See Willen *ibid.*, p.67.

<sup>46</sup> Willen, *ibid.*, pp.62-3.

<sup>47</sup> John's patronage of players was another example showing that livery company was used by Tudor aristocrat to establish or to reinforce their regional influence, an argument made in chapter 2.

<sup>48</sup> The only exception was their visit to Belvoir Castle on 30 December 1552.

patronage; it is not until the end of 1557 that we again have the trace of his company. The watershed of the business of the Russell's company was in 1564. After Elizabeth's accession, Francis did not restore his patronage of players immediately; in 1564, the troupe resumed their travelling performance and in that year ventured to the less familiar East Anglian and northern tours.<sup>49</sup>

This change in the touring custom of Russell's players in 1564 is significant, for this was also an exceptionally active year for this comparatively torpid troupe: seven out of the entire seventeen entries of the troupe, whose performing records extend more than twenty years, fall in this period. Moreover, this was also the last phase of the career of Russell's players. After this very active year, the company suddenly disappeared from the touring business, long before the death of their patron, earl Francis, in 1585.

The shifting of the company base to the east in 1564 was certainly an interesting issue. One possible explanation for the venture of Russell's players to the east was the earl's appointment as warden of the east marches and governor of Berwick in that year.<sup>50</sup> This single reason however could not fully explain the company's touring in 1564, for, although closely linked with the west, the Russells were no foreigners to south-eastern society. As a Privy Councillor of Henry's government,<sup>51</sup> John Russell usually spent considerable time in London; the Russell

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<sup>49</sup> The first entry of the company's reappearance is a reward paid at Ipswich. As according to the record, the earl of Bedford's players were paid on the 4th of April, it is therefore clear to us that the troupe in fact resumed their touring in 1564. See Malone Collection, vol.2 pt. 3, p.263.

<sup>50</sup> Francis was given the post in February 1564. DNB, vol.17, p.432.

<sup>51</sup> John Russell entered Henry VIII's Privy Council in 1538. See DNB, vol.17, p.446.

House in the Strand was his base in the capital. Besides, the family also acquired two important estates in the east: Chenies in Buckinghamshire and Woburn Abbey in Bedfordshire. These connections with the east, however, had never attracted the Russell's players to try the eastern circuits. Apart from the isolated visit to Cambridge in 1543-4, they had never bothered to leave their home region. Moreover, Francis appears to be reluctant in patronising players; since his returned from Marian exile, only one entry in 1557 records the existence of this family troupe. So, why did Francis 'suddenly' revive his enthusiasm for drama, and probably as unexpectedly lose his interest a year after? Francis's residence in Berwick could have been one cause for the company's venture to the east, but certainly not the only one.

Unfortunately, the unavailability of the content of the Russell's players's performance makes it difficult for us to find direct evidence explaining the incentives of these eastern tours. However, one entry of Russell's minstrels shows that Francis probably had the idea of using his livery companies with propaganda in mind. On 10 May 1554, a record in the Interrogatories and Depositions of Norwich shows that Russell's minstrels were prosecuted because of their songs.<sup>52</sup> Mary's government was sensitive to those seditious pieces carried by strolling companies. As a troupe with a Protestant master, what Russell's minstrels carried that was found inappropriate by the government of the Catholic queen was very possibly that material promoting the new religion. In other words, the case of Russell's minstrels in 1554 suggests that as early as Mary's reign, there were clues to Francis's livery company propagandist campaign.

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<sup>52</sup> The entry recorded 'arms Wharton of Estwynche in the countye of Norffolk Mynstrell,/seruante to the righte honnourable the lorde Russell examyned the [xixth] xxt day of Maye in the first yere of the reign of our souereign Lady Mary...' REED, Norwich, p.34.

The prosecution of Russell's minstrels is not the only evidence suggesting that Francis was familiar with the propagandist service that livery companies could provide; his affinity to Sir Richard Morison, the major pamphleteer of Cromwell's propagandist campaign,<sup>53</sup> makes it reasonable to assume that the earl was well acquainted with the polemical power of drama. As early as 1551, Francis had attended the conferences on the sacrament held at the houses of Morison and William Cecil; the earl's second wife, Bridget, whom he married in 1566, was the widow of Morison; and his eldest son, Edward, married Morison's daughter Jane.<sup>54</sup>

Both the prosecution case in 1554 and Russell's acquaintance with Morison uphold our speculation that the touring of the Russell's players in the East Anglian and northern circuits was not simply a movement escorting their master to the new post; the players very likely carried some propagandist obligations. This special duty made them leave their home county, venturing to unfamiliar routes and it is also this task given by their master which made them leave the most profitable circuit, the Kentish one, behind, for seeking generous rewards was not the purpose of their touring.

1564 was certainly a significant year for Russell's company, for it was not only the most active year of the troupe, it was also the last year of Russell's patronage. From John, the first earl, onwards, the Russells had retained a family acting company

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<sup>53</sup> For more about Morison, see chapter 4.

<sup>54</sup> Bridget was daughter of John, Lord Hussey. After Morison's death, she remarried in 1561 to Henry Manners, earl of Rutland. Francis was her third husband. *DNB*, vol.13, p.958; vol.17, pp.432, 433.



for more than twenty years. This convention, however, halted quite abruptly after 1564, the year in which Russell's players had been most active. In fact, Russell's termination of patronage however was not an isolated case; another Protestant patron of the time, Katherine, duchess of Suffolk, also gave up her patronage of players in 1564, long before her death.<sup>55</sup> That 1564 saw the ending year of both Russell's and Suffolk's patronage could be a coincidence, but the fact that two important Protestant patrons terminated their patronage of players in the mid-1560s should not be considered as accidental.

One possible explanation for this termination of patronage is the increasing influence of Calvinist teachings in England, which in around 1580 led to the Puritan opposition towards various sorts of entertainments, including drama. Although there is no direct evidence to explain Russell's dissolution of his troupe, the earl's increasing opposition to secular recreations was evident. As early as in the convocation of 1562, a radical protégé of Russell, Richard Tremayne, pressed for the abolition of 'all curious singing and playing of the organs,' and the use of the cross in baptism.<sup>56</sup> In around 1573 Russell outlawed dancing and bowling at Tavistock. And his influence in the west is suggested by John Wasson as the reason for the decline of professional drama at Plymouth after 1592-3.<sup>57</sup> Russell's puritan views were not confined to the neighbouring towns of the household; they extended to the more

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<sup>55</sup> See chapter 4.

<sup>56</sup> Finberg, 'A Chapter of Religious History', pp.367-8. Tremayne had been in Germany during Mary's reign. Installed as treasurer of the Exeter cathedral in 1560, rector of Doddiscombsleigh 1561-64, and of Combe Martin from 1569, he was once Bedford's candidate for the bishopric in succession to William Alley. See *ibid.*, p.368, n.1.

<sup>57</sup> *REED, Devon*, xx.



distant corners of his region. For example, Barnstaple, once a popular location, turned into a Puritan town, which paid off almost all visiting players for not performing after 1616-17.<sup>58</sup>

The decreasing demand for religious propaganda was possibly another reason for the termination of patronage. The duchess of Suffolk, as shown in previous chapter, harboured great hopes for further Protestant gains when Elizabeth came to the throne. To accelerate the pace of reformation or to call forth popular support for the expected religious changes, the duchess dispatched her company to promote the cause. Her expectations were frustrated, however, and the queen had made up her mind not to adopt any of that radical religious policy, which had caused such disturbance in previous reigns.<sup>59</sup> The resolute religious attitude of the Queen would not have been acknowledged merely by the duchess alone, but must have been felt by the rest of the reforming party. And Russell, who was at the core of the politics, certainly perceived the new religious policy, perhaps even earlier than the duchess. As the queen was the only one who could decide the religious course and she was not persuadable, there was no reason to keep on patronising a propagandist troupe to promote the cause. The Suffolk's and Russell's players were therefore disbanded accordingly.

Drama did not cease to be a convenient means of persuasion, although religious matters may no longer be issues they could have a word with. Tudor

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<sup>58</sup> See *ibid.*, xiii.

<sup>59</sup> From the communications of Katherine in her last ten years, we see no signs of her talking about religious reform.

aristocrats continued to use drama as a channel to express their wishes and frustration well into the 1580s. This fact, however, did not reduce the significance of the Suffolk and Russell examples. The increasing Calvinist influence and the decreasing value of players as a powerful means of persuasion, though not manifest in the first decades of Elizabeth's reign, did gradually shadow the future of travelling players. The declining value of keeping a livery company and the increasing attraction of London as a guaranteed location for profit in the coming years gradually contributed to the end of the era of travelling players.<sup>60</sup>

Russell's players were important for their religious propaganda. Nevertheless, the absence of their performing contents makes it impossible for us to form a more complete picture of their propagandist campaign. Fortunately, during the Elizabethan period, we have the most magnificent noble patron of the sixteenth century—Robert Dudley, earl of Leicester. Through the comparatively abundant information provided by Leicester's patronage of players, we are able to reconstruct, with some confidence, how drama served as an effective means for persuasion, and how a livery company helped to promote their patron's cause.

### **iii. Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, and His Royal Matrimonial Campaign**

Robert Dudley, earl of Leicester, born in around 1532, was the fifth son of John Dudley, duke of Northumberland. The Dudleys are a famous family in Tudor history.

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<sup>60</sup> The termination of the travelling business is a complicated question, which requires larger space for discussion. It will be further investigated in the final chapter.

Edmund Dudley, Robert's grandfather, was the tarnished minister of Henry VII, responsible for the severe policy of the first Tudor monarch. Robert's father, John, was the disgraced 'traitor' who tried to deprive Mary Tudor of her legitimate right to the English throne.

The most important episode of Robert's life was his relationship with Elizabeth. Derek Wilson suggests that the two first met at the royal school devised by Queen Catherine Parr and Elizabeth and Robert, who were about the same age, soon became great friends.<sup>61</sup> Elizabeth's accession was the turning point of Robert's career; as an old acquaintance, he soon became a much-favoured courtier of the queen. Robert's advancement can be attributed to Elizabeth's fondness for him. As early as April 1559, Count de Feria, the Spanish ambassador, had reported to Philip II that 'Lord Robert has come so much into favour that he does whatever he likes with affairs and it is even said that her Majesty visits him in his chamber day and night.'<sup>62</sup> Dudley himself also held great expectation of a royal marriage. According to the letter of Bishop Quadra, De Feria's successor, to his master on 28 March 1560, 'Lord Robert told somebody...that if he live another year he will be in a very different position from now. He is laying in a good stock of arms, and is assuming every day a more masterful part in affairs. They say that he thinks of divorcing his wife.'<sup>63</sup> And later in the same year, there were rumours that the queen was with child

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<sup>61</sup> Derek Wilson, Sweet Robin: A Biography of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester 1533-1588 (London, 1981).

<sup>62</sup> CSP, Spanish, Elizabeth, vol.1, p.57.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p.141.

by Dudley.<sup>64</sup>

Dudley's relationship with Elizabeth had caused him much unpopularity amongst the peers.<sup>65</sup> And the anomalous death of Dudley's wife in 1560 had made the consummation of the marriage proposal even more difficult.<sup>66</sup> Although it appears that the accident did not decrease the queen's affection, Dudley was, as Cecil later remarked, 'infamed by his wife's death,' and the questionable death of Lady Amy became a libel repeatedly used by Dudley's enemies to attack him.<sup>67</sup> Although Dudley did not abandon hope of the marriage, due to the resolute opposition from the court, Elizabeth seems to have dismissed the idea by 1563.<sup>68</sup> Dudley died in 1588. When the news arrived, the queen was said to be grief stricken. A contemporary account records that 'she was so grieved that for some days she shut herself in her chamber alone, and refused to speak to anyone until the Treasurer and other Councillors had the doors broken open and entered to see her.'<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> One Anne Dowe of Brentford, for example, was sent to prison for her assertion of Elizabeth's pregnancy; she was the first victim of a long line of offenders. See DNB, vol.6, p.113. Cf. Jones, The Birth of the Elizabethan Age, p.132.

<sup>65</sup> See CSP, Spanish, Elizabeth, vol.1, p.107; Frederick Chamberlin, Elizabeth and Leicester (New York, 1939), p.93. Cf. Wilson, Sweet Robin, p.73. DNB, vol.6, pp.114-5. The Spanish ambassador wrote home reporting that if the marriage took place, Philip II would find England an easy conquest. DNB, vol.6, p.115. Cf. CSP, Spanish, vol.1, pp.174-5.

<sup>66</sup> Lady Amy was found lying dead at the foot of the staircase in the hall of her residence, Cumnor Place. Rumour said that Dudley had talked of divorcing or of poisoning his wife many months before her death, and that Lady Amy was in fact thrown downstairs by one Anthony Forster, under Dudley's command. See DNB, vol.6, p.113.

<sup>67</sup> For instance, the story of the accident was adopted in 'Leicester's Commonwealth', a catholic libel on Dudley, published in 1584. See CSP, Spanish, Elizabeth, vol.1, no.119. DNB, vol.6, pp.113-4.

<sup>68</sup> DNB, vol.6, p.115.

<sup>69</sup> CSP, Spanish, Elizabeth, vol.4, p.431.

Dudley and Cecil were the two most influential figures of Elizabeth's court, and were also the most important patrons of the time. But unlike Cecil, whose patronage was more confined to political and economic spheres, Leicester gave much of his patronage to men of letters.<sup>70</sup> According to Eleanor Rosenberg, there are at least 94 works dedicated to the earl, including those of eminent writers, such as Edmund Spenser and John Stow, and his clients covered almost every field of literature: writers, translators, chroniclers, preachers, poets, printers, and actors.

There are two important reasons for Leicester's literary patronage. To sustain the Queen's favour was one. Leicester's leading status in the court depended solely on Elizabeth's affections for him. To display himself worthy of the Queen's attachment, he not only had to make lavish gifts to his royal mistress from time to time, but also needed to maintain a lifestyle no less spectacular than a prince.<sup>71</sup> One good way to illustrate his magnificence was literary patronage. Through the hands of eminent writers, Leicester's grandeur was made known to the people, both inside and outside the court.

Literature also served as a less direct way for Leicester to disclose his opinions. As Wilson well remarks, drama, drawing themes and characters from mythology and history, could comment on the prevailing issues of the day without giving offence.<sup>72</sup> Sensitive issues, such as the Queen's marriage or religion, could only be promoted

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<sup>70</sup> For Cecil's role as an Elizabethan patron, see 'Introduction'.

<sup>71</sup> For Leicester's gifts to the Queen, see Wilson, *Sweet Robin*, p.145.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p.155.

by circuitous methods. As an expert in persuasion, Leicester often used literary forms, such as drama, to express his wishes and desires to his royal mistress and literary patronage helped the earl obtain the tools he needed for persuasion. In Leicester's life, marrying Elizabeth and restoring the family reputation were the two major tasks. The earl repeatedly used literary forms, such as drama, to promote his causes. Drama played a significant role in the earl's propagandist campaign. In the following discussion, an investigation of Leicester's application of his theatrical patronage to achieve his aims is given.

As Wilson remarks, Leicester was the leading patron of pre-Shakespearean drama.<sup>73</sup> Growing up with various court entertainments—masques, mimes, plays and pageants—the earl doubtless established his fondness of drama in an early age and enjoyed participating in and presenting them. Leicester's interest in theatre however was not purely recreational; as a person familiar with drama, he was well aware of the power of theatre as a vehicle for expressing his own opinions.<sup>74</sup>

One good example of Leicester's application was the Christmas festivity held at the Inner Temple in 1561/2. It was the tradition of the Inns of Court to stage elaborate festivities throughout the holiday,<sup>75</sup> and as the Constable-Marshal, it was the responsibility of Leicester to organise this court celebration. The revels of 1561,

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., pp.151-2.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p.152. Cf. Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean, The Queen's Men and Their Plays, 1583-1603 (Cambridge, 1998), p.21.

<sup>75</sup> Norman Sanders argues that the tradition can be traced back to the beginning of the fifteenth century. See Norman Sanders, Richard Southern, T.W. Craik, and Lois Potter (eds.), The Revels History of Drama in English (London, 1980), vol.2, p.33.

however were distinct from other such festivities, for, as Derek Wilson comments, they were celebrated ‘with a richness of display and an extravagance in feasting probably never before equalled.’<sup>76</sup> According to the diary of Henry Machyn, a London draper who furnished funerals, the events began with a procession through the City:

‘The xxvij day of Desember cam rydyng thugh London a lord of mysrull, in clene complett harnes, gylt, with a hondered grett horse and gentyll-men rydyng gorgously with chenes of gold, and there horses godly trapytt, unto the Tempull, for ther was grett cher all Chrytynmas tyll [blank], and grett revels as ever was for the gentyllmen of the Tempull evere day, for mony of the conselle was there.’<sup>77</sup>

Apart from the members of the Council, noblemen, officers of the royal household, the Lieutenant of the Tower, aldermen of the City, and members of the livery companies were all in the Christmas parade. However, the most impressive figure of all was the organiser of the festivity—Lord Robert Dudley. He, in the revels guise of Prince Palaphilos, presided over the procession, and sitting on a raised dais, his arms, a winged horse argent on a field azure, blazoned above. As Prince Palaphilos, Leicester received the homage of his court, and named the twenty-four Knights of the imaginary Order of Pagasus. The ceremony ended with

‘the high Constable dubbeth him with sworde, byddyng hym wise knight, by liuing Vertue. Al which obseruances finished, Palaphilos biddeth them to offer to Pallas, the first fruites of their gotten vertues, geuing thankes to y<sup>e</sup> goddes with sacrifice. And so they departed towardses the Temple, in suche order as they came, sauing accompanied w<sup>t</sup> two noble men, to euery of them. And before thê wer all sowndes of Marce his musike & officers of armes in their order. their sacrifice done, they returned in like sort to Palaphilos hall, where they prepared prices of honour, for Tylt, Turney, and such knightlye pastimes. And after for theyr solace, they masked with Bewties dames, with such beauenly aarmony, as Appollo and Orpheus had shewed their cunnyng. At lenth, the high Constable departed y<sup>e</sup> hall, anon after, the

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<sup>76</sup> Wilson, *Sweet Robin*, p.131.

<sup>77</sup> John G. Nichols (ed.), *The Diary of Henry Machyn, Citizen and Merchant-Taylor of London From A.D. 1550 to A.D. 1563*, Camden Society 42 (London, 1848), pp.273-4. Cf. Marie Axton, *The Queen’s Two Bodies: Drama and the Elizabethan Succession* (London, 1977), p.40. Wilson, *Sweet Robin*, pp.131-2.



squiers for y<sup>e</sup> body prepared to rest. And the Vshers cōmaūded to aduoide, and so I departed to Palaphilos lodging, where I lackt no entertainerment.’<sup>78</sup>

The parade was just the beginning of the entire Christmas celebration, which consisted of a tilt, a tourney, a masque, and a play.<sup>79</sup> The latter two, which apparently promoted the Dudley cause, were arranged by the Master of the Horse to be presented again before the Queen on 18 January 1562. According to Machyn’s diary,

‘The xviiij day of January was a play in the quen(’s) hall at Westmynster by the gentyll-men of the Tempull, and after a grett maske, for ther was a grett skaffold in the hall, with grett tryhumpe as had bene sene; and the morrow after the skaffold was taken done.’<sup>80</sup>

The two dramatic presentations, in Wilson’s words, were ‘full of topical, political allusions.’<sup>81</sup> The play performed in the afternoon was called *Gorboduc or Ferrex and Porrex*, a tragedy written by Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton, two gentlemen-lawyers of the Inner Temple.<sup>82</sup> *Gorboduc* had a pirate edition in 1565, and an official printing in 1570.<sup>83</sup> In the 1570 edition, the printer explained the context of the production of the play:

‘...this Tragedie was for furniture of part of the grand Christmase in the Inner

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<sup>78</sup> Gerard Legh, *Accedens of Armory* (London, 1562), ff.224-5. Cf. John Gough Nichols (ed.), *Herald and Genealogist*, vol.1 (London, 1863), pp.101-5. Wilson, *Sweet Robin*, p.132. (Unfortunately, I cannot find the passage quoted by Wilson in Legh’s book).

<sup>79</sup> Wilson, *ibid.*, p.132.

<sup>80</sup> Nichols (ed.), *The Diary of Henry Machyn*, p.275. Cf. Axton, *Queen’s Two Bodies*, p.40.

<sup>81</sup> Wilson, *Sweet Robin*, p.132.

<sup>82</sup> For discussion on *Gorboduc*, see Greg Walker, *The Politics of Performance in Early Renaissance Drama* (Cambridge, 1998), ch.6. White, *Theatre and Reformation*, pp.63-4, Marie Axton, ‘Robert Dudley and the Inner Temple Revels’, *The Historical Journal*, 13:3 (1970), pp.365-78. Susan Doran, *Monarchy and Matrimony: The Courtships of Elizabeth I* (London, 1996), pp.55-7. Norman Jones and Paul White, ‘*Gorboduc* and Royal Marriage: Politics and Elizabethan Playgoer’s report of the Premiere Performance’, *English Literary Renaissance*, 26 (1996), pp.3-16. And Mervyn James and Greg Walker, ‘The Politics of *Gorboduc*’, *English Historical Review* (February 1995), pp.109-121.

<sup>83</sup> Axton, *Queen’s Two Bodies*, p.41.



Temple first written about nine yeares agoe by the right honourable Thomas now Lorde Buckherst, and by T. Norton, and after shewed before her Maiestie, and neuer intended by the authors therof to be published.’<sup>84</sup>

*Gorboduc* was first performed on Twelfth Night 1562 as part of the Inner Temple Christmas celebrations. Elizabeth was not present at this first performance, but she certainly heard of the play before long; it was therefore brought into the Christmas celebration at Whitehall on 18 January by royal command. Although not much is known about this second performance at Whitehall, an account by an eyewitness of the first presentation, Robert Beale, an Elizabethan courtier and administrator, provides us with details of the play. The description, though somewhat miscellaneous, is invaluable.<sup>85</sup>

‘Ther was a Tragedie played in the Inner Temple of the two brethren Porrex and Ferrex K[ings] of Brytayne betwene whome the father had devyded the Realm, the one slewe the other and the mother slewe the manquil[e]r [i.e. the manqueller or man-killer]. It was thus used. Firste wilde men cam[e] in and woulde have broken a whole fagott, but could not, the stickes they brake being severed [i.e. the dumb show before Act I]. Then cam[e] in a king to whome was geven a clere glasse, and a golden cupp of golde covered, full of poyson, the glasse he caste under his fote and brake hyt, the poyson he drank of [the dumb show before Act II], after cam[e] in mom[m]ers [the dumb show before Act IV]. The shadowes were declared by the Chor[us] first to signyfie unytie, the 2 [i.e. second] howe that men refused the certen and toocke the uncerten, wherby was ment that yt was better for the quene to marye with the L[ord] R[obert] knowen then with the K[ing] of Sweden. The thryde to declare that cyvill discention bredeth mo[u]rning. Many thinges were handled or mariage, and that the matter was to be debated in p[ar]liament, because yt was much banding but th[at] hit ought to be determined by the councell. Ther was also declared howe a straunge duke seying the relme at dyvysion, would have taken upon him the crowne, but the people would not hytt. And many thinges were saied

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<sup>84</sup> John W. Cunliffe (ed.), *Early English Classical Tragedies* (Oxford, 1912), p.5. The publisher of the 1570 edition also explained the earlier pirate edition: ‘one W.G. getting a copies therof at some yongmans hand that lacked a litle money and much discretion, in the last great plage. an. 1565. about v. yeares past, while the said Lord was out of England, and T. Norton farre out of London, and neither of them both made priuie, put it forth excedingly corrupted...’ See *ibid.* Cf. Axton, *Queen’s Two Bodies*, p.41. Paul Bacquet suggests that publication in 1565 coincided deliberately with news of Mary Stuart’s pregnancy. This edition was pirated and both authors disclaimed it. Bacquet further suggests that the authorised edition in 1570/1 was printed at a time when both authors had been actively engaged in putting down the Northern Rebellion. See Axton, *ibid.*, p.41 n.1.

<sup>85</sup> See Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton, *Gorboduc or Ferrex and Porrex* (ed.) Irby B. Cauthen (London, 1970), xii. All the quotations of the play in the following discussion are from Cauthen’s edition.

for the succession to put thinges in certenty. The play was the [blank] daye of January at the courte before the Quene, where none ambassadors were present but the Spanyshe.<sup>86</sup>

Beale does not give us many details of the plot, but fortunately, the play is extant. The title figure, King Gorboduc, was a fictional English monarch. Against the advice of his counsellor, Eubulus, he divides his kingdom during his lifetime between his two sons, Ferrex and Porrex. His practice overturns the tradition of primogeniture, thus setting up a rivalry between the two heirs. Porrex, fearing an attempt upon his life and lands, kills his brother. To avenge the death of her always-preferred child, the queen, Videna, kills the younger one. The bloody struggle within the court invited a wider cycle of violence: the commons, aroused by the cruelty, rise in rebellion and kill both Gorboduc and his queen, and this in turn prompts the nobles to raise bands of horsemen to put down the rising. After the suppression, the nobles can not agree on the succession, which increases the potential for a civil war. The inner turmoil of the kingdom also invites foreign invasion. Fergus, duke of Albany, threatens to establish his claim to the crown by force. The play ends with Eubulus's lamentation, mourning that the realm could have avoided the predicament if only the king had taken the good advice of his counsellors, shunned flatterers, and after the death of his sons, settled the succession definitely and with force of law.<sup>87</sup> The moral of *Gorboduc* is clear enough: to prevent England from falling into chaos, the monarch should get married and put an end to the hopes and ambitions of rival claimants to the throne.

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<sup>86</sup> The account is from the Beale MS of the British Library (BL., Add. MS 48023, fo.359v). Current quotation is based on Mervyn James and Greg Walker's transcription. See their 'The Politics of *Gorboduc*', pp.112-3.

<sup>87</sup> Walker, *The Politics of Performance*, pp.201-2.

Although there is no special reference in the dialogue, *Gorboduc* clearly suggests Dudley as the ideal candidate for the queen's hand; the allusion is clearly made in the dumb show before the second act. In the show, the king is offered two drinks: one an ordinary glass of wine, the other a golden chalice filled with poison. The king refuses the former and takes the latter. He ends up falling down dead upon the stage.<sup>88</sup> The moral of this mime is later revealed by the chorus:

'Lo, thus it is, poison in gold to take  
And wholesome drink in homely cup forsake.' (Act II, ii, 107-8)<sup>89</sup>

The golden chalice here represents the king of Sweden, Eric XIV, who was the strongest candidate for the queen's hand at the time;<sup>90</sup> whereas the 'homely cup' was Dudley, whose status and wealth were much more modest.<sup>91</sup> The symbolic meaning of the two drinks is transparent; as Beale correctly interpreted, the second dumb show was persuading the queen to marry the more reliable Lord Robert.<sup>92</sup>

One speech made at the end of the play also conveys similar information.

Eubulus in Act V speaks out in favour of the native line of succession:

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<sup>88</sup> Sackville and Norton, *Gorboduc or Ferrex and Porrex*, pp.25-6. The dumb show certainly impressed the audience. Beale described the three dumb shows before describing the play proper. James and Walker argue that it is not because the shows performed before the action, but that they had a more striking effect upon the spectator than anything in the first three acts. See their 'The Politics of *Gorboduc*', p.113.

<sup>89</sup> Sackville and Norton, *ibid.*, p.37. Cf. Doran, *Monarchy and Matrimony*, p.56.

<sup>90</sup> The king of Sweden's envoys had ostentatiously distributed gold in their bid to win Elizabeth's hand. See Doran, *ibid.*, p.56. It was not until the April of 1562 that the Swedish part gave up the proposal. For more about Swedish campaign for the marriage, see James and Walker, 'The Politics of *Gorboduc*', pp.110-12. Jones, *The Birth of the Elizabethan Age*, pp.124-5.

<sup>91</sup> Doran, *Monarchy and Matrimony*, p.56.

<sup>92</sup> James and Walker, 'The Politics of *Gorboduc*', pp.112-3. Doran, *Monarchy and Matrimony*, p.56.

‘Such one, my lords, let be your chosen king,  
Such one so born within your native land;  
Such one prefer; and in no wise admit  
The heavy yoke of foreign governance.’ (Act V, ii, ll. 169-72)<sup>93</sup>

These lines were usually considered as a statement in support of the claims to the succession of the English-born Catherine Grey over those of Mary Stuart, Queen of the Scots. The statement, however, can equally be interpreted as one in favour of the Dudley cause: an English consort for the queen, rather than a foreign match.<sup>94</sup>

After the play, there was a masque of ‘Beauty and Desire’. The masque was a classical allegory based on the story of Pallas, Perseus and Medusa. In the performance, Medusa’s many heads were symbolised by various threats that would endanger the peace and security of England, including false religion, foreign enemies, rival claimants to the throne. And Perseus, a representation of Leicester, was the hero who, beheading Medusa, protected the realm from the dangers. The message sent by the Masque was manifest: in order to preserve her kingdom, the Queen must get married, and the ideal candidate for the union was the valiant the English Perseus, Lord Robert.<sup>95</sup>

Apart from the Queen, Leicester was the doubtless the protagonist of the Christmas feasts in 1561/2; the festivity held at the Inner Temple appears to be an occasion to speak for the earl. Dudley certainly directed the Christmas celebration. His authority over the Inner Temple however was not derived entirely from his

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<sup>93</sup> Sackville and Norton, *Gorboduc or Ferrex and Porrex*, p.70. Doran mistakenly took these lines as spoken by Eubulus. See her *Monarchy and Matrimony*, p.56.

<sup>94</sup> Susan Doran is one of the scholars holding such opinion. See Doran, *ibid.*, p.56.

<sup>95</sup> See Wilson, *Sweet Robin*, p.132, Axton, *Queen’s Two Bodies*, p.40.

position as the Master of the Horse; it had much to do with the earl's patronage of the Inn. During the summer of 1561, the Inn had a dispute with the Middle Temple over the ownership of Lyon's Inn, an inn of chancery. The Inner Temple appealed to Leicester, who used his influence with the Queen, successfully, as the Inn had wished, halted all proceedings in the case by a royal order sent to the Lord Keeper.<sup>96</sup> The benchers of the Inn were extremely grateful; in November 1561, they passed a resolution asserting that

'no person or persons whatsoever now being or which at any time hereafter shall be of the fellowship or company of this our House of the Inner Temple, shall, in any wise or by any manner of means, be retained of counsel or otherwise give any counsel, help, or aid in any matter or cause against the said right honourable Lord Robert Duddeley or against any of his heirs, but that we and every of us and our successors shall at all times hereafter be of counsel with the said Lord Robert Duddeley and his heirs upon his and their pleasure therein signified to us or them in that behalf; and that the arms of the said right honourable Lord Robert Duddeley shall be set up and placed in some seemly and convenient place in the hall of this our House of the Inner Temple as a continual monument of his lordship's said goodness and great good will towards this House.'<sup>97</sup>

Patronage like that which Leicester gave the Inner Temple was one of the best ways for the earl to establish his influence; not only did the benchers of the Inn become protégés of the earl, but the conventional Inn festivities turned out to be the mouth piece of Leicester. Being such a good instrument of establishing personal influence, patronage certainly was applied by the earl to a wider sphere. Apart from the Inner Temple, Leicester was also the patron of other court departments and one of them was the Gray's Inn.

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<sup>96</sup> See F.A. Inderwick (ed.), *The Calendar of Inner Temple Records 1505-1603*, 5 vols. (London, 1896-1936), vol.1, pp.215-8. Wilson, *ibid.*, p.131, Axton, *ibid.*, p.41 n.2. According to Axton, details of the dispute can be found in the Inner Temple MS Acts of Parliament 1505-89. It however was badly damaged by fire. F.A. Inderwick translated the document before from the MS before it was damaged. See Axton, *ibid.*, p.41 n.2

<sup>97</sup> F.A. Inderwick, *ibid.*, p.218. Cf. Wilson, *ibid.*, p.131.

It remains unclear how and when Leicester established his link with the Inn; however, it appears that by 1565, the stage of the Inn, like that of the Inner Temple, became another theatre preaching for the earl's interests. In March 1565, some players from the Inn performed before the Queen at Whitehall and they performed a play centred on a debate on the queen's marriage. De Silva, the Spanish ambassador, reported the occasion:

'On the 5th instant the party of the Earl of Leicester gave a supper to the Queen in the palace...There was a joust and a tourney on horseback afterwards. The challengers were the Earl of Essex, the Earl of Sussex and Hunsdon...When this was ended we went to the Queen's rooms and descended to where all was prepared for the representation of a comedy in English...The plot was founded on the question of marriage, discussed between Juno and Diana, Juno advocating marriage and Diana chastity. Jupiter gave the verdict in favour of matrimony, after many things had passed on both sides in defence of the respective arguments. The Queen turned to me and said, 'This is all against me.' After the comedy there was a masquerade of satyrs, or wild gods, who danced with the ladies, and when this was finished there entered ten parties of twelve gentlemen each, the same who had fought in the foot tourney, and these, all armed as they were, danced with the ladies...'98

Apart from the Inns of Court, Leicester's patronage also covered other groups that would perform before the queen from time to time. The boys of Chapel Royal was one of them. Dudley's connection with the company was mainly their master, William Hunnis. Hunnis's link with the Dudleys could be traced back to Leicester's father John, duke of Northumberland. It was through the duke's introduction that Hunnis entered the royal service. When Robert was arrested for the Dudley conspiracy against Queen Mary, Hunnis was his fellow prisoner. Elizabeth restored Hunnis to his office and he was employed by Leicester in the 1575 Kenilworth festivities and three years later he dedicated a devotional work, *A Hive Full of Honey*, to his patron. In return for the services provided by Hunnis and the boys, who had been the mouthpiece of the earl's policies, Leicester applied his influence protecting

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<sup>98</sup> CSP, Spanish, Elizabeth, vol.1, pp.404-5. Wilson, *ibid.*, p.155.



the man and his company. For instance, when the boys were refused giving public performances in the Blackfriars, Leicester wrote to the owner, Sir William More, assuring that such 'practice' was essential 'for the better trayning them to do her Maiestie service.'<sup>99</sup>

Leicester's patronage was not confined to a certain party but covered as wide a range as was possible. Sebastian Westcote, Hunnis's counterpart at St. Paul's, therefore was also a Dudley client. Westcote became Master of St. Paul's Children in around 1550. He was a steadfast Catholic. In 1561, he was cited by Bishop Grindal for refusing the communion, but the bishop did not excommunicate Westcote immediately, in hope that his influential friends at court (probably including Leicester) would be able to change his mind. Unfortunately, nothing was achieved, so two years later, Grindal decided to suspend the Master from his office, claiming that children cannot be entrusted to a man of such obstinate popishness. Grindal's sentence was never carried out, however, for Leicester intervened and the bishop was forced to withdraw his verdict. Despite further complains about Westcote's religion,<sup>100</sup> under Leicester's protection, the choirmaster continued to stage performances at court and at public theatres for the rest of his life. When Leicester's players performed at court during the Christmas seasons of 1560, 1561, and 1562, they shared the stage with the children's company of St. Paul's. Westcote died in 1582; he left a property of considerable value.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Leicester's letter on 19 September 1581 to More is transcribed in H.N. Hillebrand's 'The Child Actors', University of Illinois Studies in Language and Literature, 11:1 and 2 (1926), p.91 For more about the whole issue, see also pp.90-1. Cf. Wilson, ibid., pp.157-8.

<sup>100</sup> Westcote was charged of papism by the City council of London in 1575, and was convicted for heresy in 1577/8. See Rosenberg, Leicester: Patron of Letters, p.302.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., pp.301-2; Wilson, Sweet Robin, p.158.

Leicester's propaganda campaign was not confined to the court; it stretched out to various corners of the kingdom whenever possible. One good example is the performances carried out at the Christmas feast of 1561/2. The parade, which personified Leicester as Prince Pallaphilos, and the marriage masque were soon printed in Gerard Legh's Accedens of Armory in 1562 and reprinted at least five times, in 1568, 1576, 1591, 1597, and 1612.

Printing was only one channel to spread the polemical messages to the public. As Cromwell's propagandist Morison pointed out, visual presentation was often more efficient a means to impress the common people. The significance of the publication of plays such as *Gorboduc* therefore was not in that it made the play reach a wider readership, but in that the script was then available to acting companies, who, purposely or not, helped to disseminate the bestowed theme whenever they performed the piece.<sup>102</sup> Amongst all the playing companies helping to circulate Leicester's message, there is one troupe of most importance; that is the earl's own players—Leicester's Men.

Leicester's acting company, firstly known as Lord Robert Dudley's players, was formed in around 1558-9, when the master began to enjoy the new queen's affection. Like their master, Lord Robert's men soon procured royal favour; from as early as 1560-1, they performed at the court Christmas festivity for two consecutive years. The troupe returned to royal service in 1572-3, and from then on, for more

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<sup>102</sup> See Sydney Anglo, 'An Early Tudor Programme for Plays and Other Demonstrations against the Pope,' Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes, 20 (1957), p.179. For more about Morison's views of propaganda, see chapter 4.



than ten years, they played before the Queen almost annually.<sup>103</sup>

The court however was only a venue for Leicester's players; since their formation, they had, like more livery companies of the time, commenced their long history of provincial touring. In June 1559, Leicester wrote to the earl of Shrewsbury, then Lord President of the Council of the North, requesting his license for Dudley's actors to play in the northern counties.<sup>104</sup> Dudley appealed:

'My Good Lorde,--Where my servauntes, bringers hereof unto you, be suche as ar plaiers of interludes; and for the same have the Licence of diverse of my Lords here, under ther seales and handis, to plaies in diverse shieres within the realme under there auctorities, as maie amplie appere unto your L. by the same licence. I have thought among the rest by my Lettres to beseche your good L. conformitie to them likewise, that they may have your hand and seale to ther licence for the like libertye in Yorkeshiere; being honest men, and suche as shall plaie none other matters (I trust); but tollerable and convenient; whereof some of them have bene herde alredie before diverse of my Lordies: for whom I shall have good cause to thank your L. and to remaine your L. to the best that shall lie in my litle power. And thus I take my leave of your good L.'<sup>105</sup>

It turns out that Leicester's men did not take up the northern trip in 1559. In the following thirty years of their touring history, however, they proved to be the most important noble company on the road. The significance of Leicester's players falls in three aspects. Firstly, they were the most-widely-travelled troupe. From their first formation in 1558-9 till the end of their career in 1588, they had performed in at least 48 locations, covering 24 counties. Their touring included not only all major circuits,

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<sup>103</sup> Leicester's players performed at court in 1573-4 (26, 28 December), 1574 (21 February and probably on 26 December), 1575 (New Year, and probably on 28 December), 1576 (30 December), 1577-8 (Christmas), 1579 (4 January, and probably 6 of January as well), 1580 (6 January and 26 December), 1581 (7 February), and in 1583 (10 February). Murray, *English Dramatic Companies*, 2 vols. (London, 1910), vol.1, pp.36-7. Chambers, *ES*, vol.4, pp.88-99.

<sup>104</sup> Before 1564, when Robert Dudley was created first earl of Leicester, his players were known as Lord Robert Dudley's players.

<sup>105</sup> Murray, *English Dramatic Companies*, vol.2, p.119. Cf. Rosenberg, *Leicester, Patron of Letters*, p.301.

but extended to far north-western towns, such as Lathom, Lancashire, as well.<sup>106</sup> The company was also the most active noble company of the time: they produced 187 entries, far in excess by any other noble troupes in the Tudor period. Leicester's Men also surpassed other noble companies in the payments they received; they received an average payment of 15s 2d within the thirty years of their business. Among all greater companies, only the earl of Pembroke's and Lord Admiral's players received a better average payment than Leicester's;<sup>107</sup> the two companies, however, belonged to the later period,<sup>108</sup> which means inflation and commercialisation could have made the payments more generous.<sup>109</sup> As the most important noble travelling companies of the Tudor period, the touring of Leicester's Men is certainly worthy of thorough investigation. In the following discussion, a detailed study of the travels of the company is given.

From 1564 onwards, the seat of Leicester's household was at Kenilworth Castle, Warwickshire.<sup>110</sup> However, as the most favoured courtier of Queen Elizabeth, the earl spent most of his time at court. He therefore purchased several residences near the capital. Leicester's House in the Strand was the place where Dudley stayed while in London. Most travels of Leicester's players launched from the capital.

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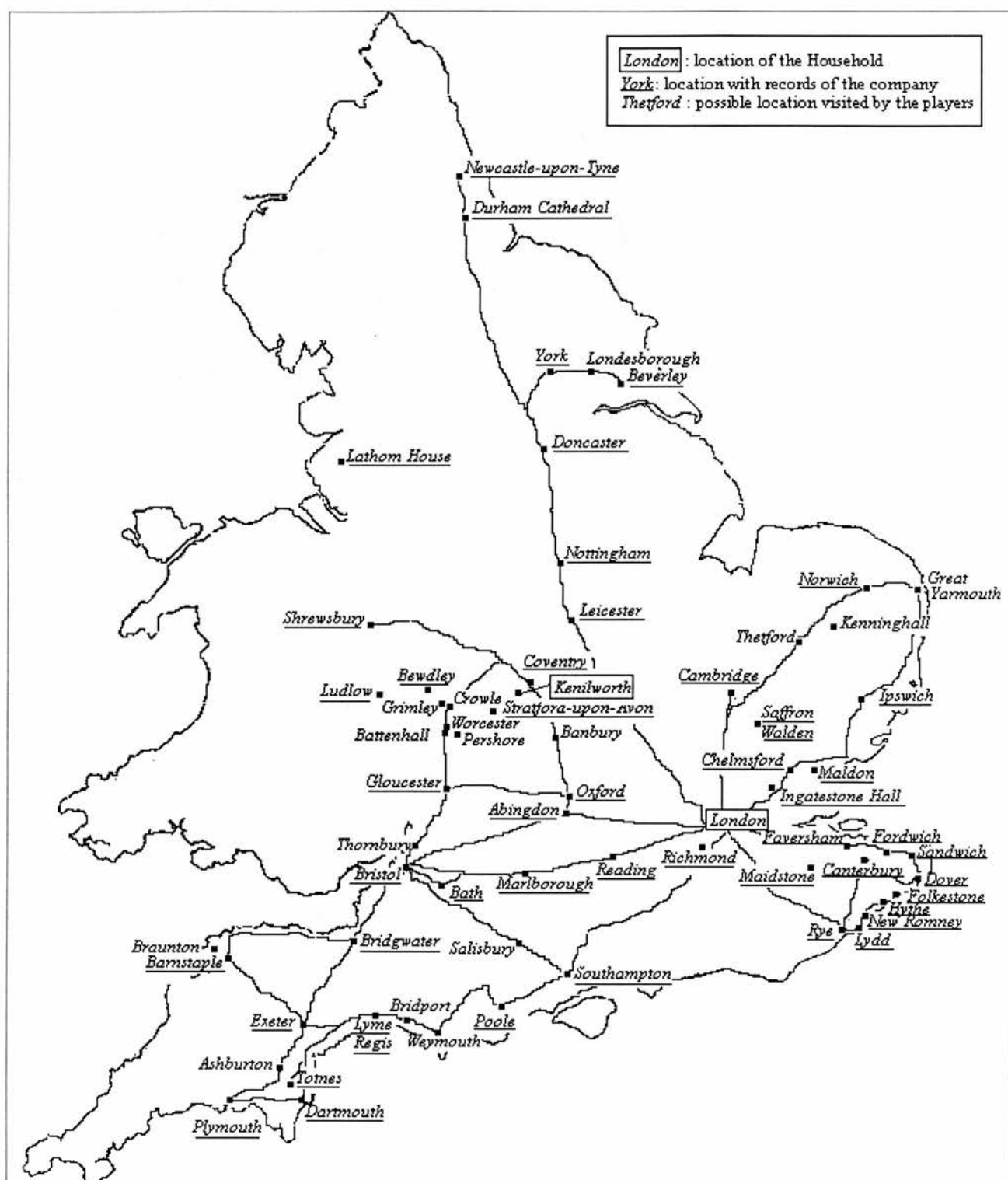
<sup>106</sup> They are one of the few companies that have ever ventured to the north-west. They, for instance, was rewarded at Lathom House in Lancashire of the Stanley's in 1586-7. See David George (ed.), REED, Lancashire (Toronto, c.1991), p.180. As the entries of Leicester's players are numerous, in the following discussion, the sources consulted, unless necessary, are not itemised. See 'Introduction' of this thesis for the compilation of the database.

<sup>107</sup> Their average payments are 17s 10d and 15s 6d respectively.

<sup>108</sup> Entries of these two companies are mainly of the post-1580 period.

<sup>109</sup> For comparison of Leicester's players with other livery companies, see chapter 2.

<sup>110</sup> The manor and the castle of Kenilworth was granted by the Queen in 1563.



Map 6: The Touring of the Earl of Leicester's Players

Adjacent to their London base, the Kentish circuit was one of the major routes favoured by the company. They began to tour the circuit in as early as 1559-60, and did not give up until the last year of the earl's life. There are 53 references to their Kentish trips, and 11 locations preserve records of their visits. Amongst these 11 places, Canterbury was the most favoured one; Leicester's men are known to have been there at least 13 times. Other major towns of the circuit were also visited by the company without exception.<sup>111</sup> And even a less convenient town such as Maidstone witnessed performances by Leicester's players at least twice.

Before 1564, Leicester's men toured the circuit annually: departing from London, they visited consecutively Dover and Canterbury in 1559-60, Lydd, Rye, Canterbury and Dover in 1560-1, New Romney, Lydd, Canterbury, and Dover in 1561-2, and Lydd, Rye, Canterbury, and Dover in 1563-4.<sup>112</sup> There is an interruption of the annual Kentish tour between 1564-8; only one isolated entry at Canterbury in 1566-7 is found. After a suspension of almost five years, in 1569-70, Leicester's Men resumed their Kentish travel on an even larger scale: from London, they toured to Faversham, New Romney, Lydd, Rye, Canterbury, Dover, then returned to the capital. In the following year, they even visited Maidstone.

The 1569-70 Kentish tour however did not make Leicester's players return to their habitual annual touring. They again left the Kentish region behind after the

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<sup>111</sup> The entry number of Leicester's Men in major Kentish towns are: Dover (8), New Romney (7), Lydd (5), Faversham (4), Fordwich (3), Hythe (2), Sandwich (1), Folkestone (1).

<sup>112</sup> Although from Dover, the troupe could tour the circuit either clockwise (Dover-coastal towns-Rye-Canterbury-Dover), or the other way round, it appears that Leicester's Men preferred to visit the coastal towns first. For the touring of the troupe, see Map 6 and appendix 6.

‘grand tour’; it is not until 1574-5 that we again trace the troupe in the region. This time, the players made the Kentish circuit part of their regular schedule. Between 1574-81, they toured the circuit at least six times. They were at Sandwich (26 September)<sup>113</sup> and Canterbury (3 and 7 December) in 1574-5, New Romney and Rye in 1575-6, Faversham, Canterbury, and Rye in 1576-7, New Romney, Canterbury, and Dover in 1577-9, Faversham and Fordwich in 1579-80, and Fordwich and New Romney (13 March) in 1580-1.<sup>114</sup> 1581-6 was another period in which we can see no trace of the company in the region. They returned to Kent in 1586-7, and before the end of Dudley’s patronage, made two great tours on the circuit: Fordwich, Rye, (Maidstone) (23 January), Canterbury, Dover (4 March) in 1586-7, and Faversham, Dover, Folkestone, Hythe, New Romney, Lydd, and Rye in 1587-8.

East Anglia was another tour often taken by Leicester’s players. There are 43 entries from seven locations belonging to the circuit. Among the seven East Anglian towns, Ipswich was the most favoured; the troupe visited there at least 15 times. Norfolk was another county that often received the players, yielding 10 entries. Leicester’s Men appeared in the remaining locations with similar frequency: there are five records at Cambridge and Maldon, four at Chelmsford, and three at Saffron Walden. Ingatestone Hall, home of Sir William Petre, also provides one entry.

Like the Kentish tour, Leicester’s Men took the East Anglian one as soon as the earl started his patronage. Before 1565, the players had toured the circuit at least

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<sup>113</sup> The date given here and in the following discussion is the date of the record, not necessary the time of performance. However, as it is more likely that entries were made soon after the payment was given, the date of the record is still suggestive.

<sup>114</sup> The arrangement of the location is based on the touring order.

four times: embarking from London, they visited Saffron Walden, Cambridge, Norwich, and Ingatestone Hall in 1559-61; Cambridge (18 March), Ipswich, and Maldon in 1561-3; Norwich, Ipswich (11 November, 2 and 3 January), Maldon, and Chelmsford in 1563-4; and Cambridge, Norwich, Ipswich (21 February), Maldon, and Chelmsford in 1564-5. Their East Anglia travel was suspended in the mid-1560s, when they were last seen at Norwich in 1565-6.<sup>115</sup>

Leicester's Men resumed their tour of the eastern counties in 1570-1; they visited Saffron Walden, Cambridge, and Ipswich (15 July, 25 October). And in the following ten years, they travelled at least part of the circuit yearly: they were at Chelmsford (13 June), Maldon (13 June), and Ipswich (18 June) in 1573-4; at Ipswich in 1575-6 and 1576-7; at Norwich, Maldon (1 September), and Chelmsford (1 September) in 1577-8; at Cambridge, Norwich, and Ipswich in 1579-80; and at Ipswich again in 1581-2.<sup>116</sup> There is again a short interruption in the records of Leicester's Men between 1582-4. They then returned to their habitual touring in 1584-5, performing at Norwich and Ipswich (4 June) in that year. And they did not give up the circuit until the end of Leicester's patronage: they were at Norwich in 1586-7, at Saffron Walden, Norwich, and Ipswich (14 September) in 1587-8.

Although Leicester wrote to the earl of Shrewsbury asking for permission for his players to perform in the northern counties in June 1559, it appears that the troupe did not venture to the region immediately; it is not until 1561 that we first see them

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<sup>115</sup> The Norwich entry was an isolated one.

<sup>116</sup> From the experience of Leicester's Men, it is revealed that a company could have performed at Maldon and Chelmsford on the same day.

perform in the north; they performed at Beverley, which was also the most favoured location of the players in the north.<sup>117</sup> Compared to the Kentish and East Anglia circuits, the northern tour was less taken by Leicester's men; there are only 24 entries of their visits. Before 1564, Beverley and Leicester were the two locations that contain records of Leicester's players: the former contains four entries (1561, 1563, 1563-4, and 1564), while the latter two (1 July and 12 November 1563-4). As there was a road linking London, Leicester and Beverley, it is possible that Leicester's men stopped by Leicester on their way to Beverley in 1563-4.

The northern tour was suspended between 1564-8, and when it was resumed in 1568-9, it was taken in a larger scale: apart from Leicester and Beverley, locations such as Nottingham, and Doncaster were included. The northern touring of the company lasted for about six succeeding years, providing 11 entries. Unfortunately, as the records are comparatively isolated from each other, only two major tours can be reconstructed. Departing from London, the company travelled to Leicester, Nottingham, and then arrived Beverley in around 1571-2, and took a similar route but stopped at Doncaster in 1574-5.

There was brief period for which records survive from their northern tour in 1580. This time, Leicester's men did not take their usual route to Beverley, but further to the north: they arrived Durham in July (28), and then to Newcastle in around September (first week). The 1580 tour however was an isolated one, for Leicester's men did not resume their habitual northern tour until 1584-5, and they

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<sup>117</sup> There are eight entries of Leicester's Men at Beverley. Other locations on the northern circuit visited by the company are: Leicester (7), Nottingham (5), and Doncaster, York, Newcastle, and Durham Cathedral (1).



never bothered to travel further than York. They performed at Leicester in 1584-5, Leicester then Nottingham in 1586-7, and Nottingham, then York (13 July) in 1587-8.

The western tour was the last major trip made by Leicester's players but it was also the most complicated one, for it contained two primary circuits, the Midland and the South-Western. As it is not uncommon for the company to combine parts of two circuits into one trip, the two circuits will be discussed in a more general term as the western tour. Similar to their experience of other tours, Leicester's men were also busy with their travels to the west in the first few years of the earl's patronage. Before 1562, they took two major tours. In 1558-60, commencing from London, they went to Oxford as their first stop, and then, after possibly stopping by Abingdon, turned south-west to Bristol (14-20 July). From Bristol, they headed further south. The players first arrived at Bridgwater (20 July), then crossed the border, entering Devon. They possibly performed at Exeter and Ashburton, which were on the road from Bridgwater to Plymouth, and from the seaport, they turned east to Dartmouth, then probably took the coastal line, passing towns such as Totnes, Lyme Regis, Pool, and from Southampton, returned to London. The first journey of Leicester's Men to the west was certainly of large scale; they took part of the traditional Midlands circuit and most part of the South-Western one.

The 1558-60 tour was probably quite successful, for in the following year, the company headed west again. This time, however, the tour was of smaller scale: embarking from London, they first stopped at Oxford as on the first tour. But instead of turning south-west to Bristol, they continued their travel west to Gloucester. It was



from Gloucester that the company turned south. Possibly stopping by Thornbury, they arrived at Bristol at around the end of August (between 30 August and 5 September). Instead of continuing their journey further south-west, entering Devon, from Bristol, Leicester's men embarked on their returning journey. They headed south-east, passing Salisbury, and arrived at Southampton at the beginning of October. Then, as on their last tour, they took the road connecting Southampton and London, back to their master's household. Compared with the first journey, the one of 1561-2 was more confined to the Midlands; the players did not venture into the south-western counties, such as Somerset and Devon.

Similar to other major tours, the western tour also experienced an interruption in the 1560s: between 1562-9, there is no trace of the players in the region. They returned to the circuit in 1569-70 with an even larger tour which took them to at least 11 locations (covering six counties), and extended for almost nine months.<sup>118</sup> Departing from London, they headed south-west to the Southampton. From Southampton, they took the coast lane west. Their first stop was Poole (11 July), and from there, after possibly stopping by towns such as Weymouth and Bridport, they arrived at Lyme Regis. From this Dorset town, they continued southwards, entering Devon. They first performed at Totnes, then arrived at Dartmouth (30 July). Leicester's men then turned west to Plymouth, which was the farthest stop of their journey. From Plymouth, they turned north-west, possibly performed at Ashburton and Exeter, and eventually arrived at Barnstaple in the north-western corner of Devon. There was a road connecting Barnstaple and Bristol; the players therefore

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<sup>118</sup> The company did not tour any major circuit in 1569-70. It is probably because they were engaged in this western tour.

directed east, arrived Bridgwater, then took the northern line to Bristol (22-8 January).

Arriving at Bristol, Leicester's men had completed the conventional south-western circuit. Instead of heading back to London immediately from Bristol, they chose to continue their journey by taking part of the Midlands circuit on their way home. They proceeded north to Gloucester, then turned east to Oxford (4 May); from Oxford, they went south to Abingdon, and finally from there, returned to London. Leicester's Men was at Poole on around 11 July 1569, and when they arrived Oxford, it was already the beginning of May 1570. In other words, this western tour had taken the troupe for at least nine months.

After the grand tour of 1569-70, the company did not leave the western circuits, but no large-scale touring took place before 1577. During the period, they performed at at least ten locations, but no more complete touring routes can be reconstructed.<sup>119</sup> In September 1577, Leicester's Men spent about a month touring the south-western circuit. Departing from London, they first visited Southampton (22 September), they then turned west, following the coastline, and arrived at Lyme Regis in October.<sup>120</sup> They probably did not venture further south to Plymouth, for by 11 October, they had already performed at Exeter. From Exeter, the company turned north, and in about a week's time arrived at Bristol (20-6 October). The players then

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<sup>119</sup> These nine locations are Gloucester (1570-1), Stratford-upon-Avon (1572-3, 1576-7), Ludlow (1572-3), Lyme Regis (1573-4), Oxford (1573-4), Bewdley (1573-4), Bristol (1573-4), Southampton (1574-5), Coventry (1574-5), and Exeter (1576-7).

<sup>120</sup> The date of the entry of Lyme Regis is 17 October. The performing date however should have been earlier, for the entry date of the next stop, Exeter, was 11 October.

launched their return journey and on their way home, they took a more circuitous route to Bath, then followed the road passing Marlborough, Reading, back to London.

After the 1577 tour, Leicester's Men did not leave the western circuits. They, however, did not organise another western trip of large scale until 1586-7.<sup>121</sup> In that year, the players spent almost three months on the western routes. Like their previous ones, launched from London, they first went to Southampton. Then from Southampton, they took the usual route, visiting Lyme Regis (4 April), Exeter then Bristol (9-15 April). They probably diverted a little to Bath, but they certainly did not get straight home from there.<sup>122</sup> After performing at Bath, they returned to Bristol and continued their journey northwards. Their next stop was Gloucester. From Gloucester, they travelled further north, possibly stopping at various towns in Worcestershire, and then entered Warwickshire. In Warwickshire, they performed at Stratford and Coventry (July).<sup>123</sup> From Coventry, they headed for home, possibly taking the road leading south to Oxford, and Abingdon, and before turning east back to London.

In the following year, the company took another grand trip, which was the last

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<sup>121</sup> Between 1579-86, Leicester's Men had performed at Coventry (1579-80, 1581-2, 1584-5), Southampton (1581-2, twice), Shrewsbury (1581-2), Gloucester (1584-5), Abingdon (1585-6), Exeter (1585-6), Bath (1585-6), Marlborough (1586).

<sup>122</sup> The Bath entry, in other words, is an isolated one. The town was not on the main route of the troupe's journey. However, as Bath was not far from Bristol, it is reasonable to assume that the company took a short trip to Bath when they were at Bristol.

<sup>123</sup> Coventry was on the road from Bristol north. There is no major road linking Stratford with big towns nearby.

one under Leicester's patronage. Again, they took the south-western road to Southampton, after leaving London. They were at Lyme Regis by 28 April. Unlike the previous trip, they continued their journey into Devon. They arrived at Plymouth in May (15 May). They then turned north to Exeter, Bristol (9-15 June),<sup>124</sup> and finally to Gloucester (17 June). The players probably took a similar route back home as last time: they travelled further north to Coventry, then turned south, stopped by Oxford, then back to London.<sup>125</sup>

Apart from their touring records, we know very little about Leicester's Men. According to the players' petition to the earl in 1574 appealing for a license to travel, there were six members in the company, and James Burbage, was the leading man.<sup>126</sup> Three years later, a Southampton entry shows that there were twelve actors in the troupe.<sup>127</sup> McMillin and MacLean have pointed out that before the appearance of the Queen's Men, Leicester's troupe was the most widely travelled, and the most knowledgeable professionals on the road.<sup>128</sup> This statement was supported not only by the unprecedented amount of their touring records, but also by the eminent actors that the troupe recruited. Many famous names of the later London period, such as Robert Wilson and William Kemp, had spent their earlier years in Leicester's

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<sup>124</sup> There is also an entry at Bath of the troupe's visit. It is possible, like last time, that the players spared a day or two at Bath when they were at Bristol.

<sup>125</sup> The date of the Oxford entry is 11 December, which is not very reliable, for it is unlikely for the troupe spending six month to complete the touring between Gloucester and Oxford.

<sup>126</sup> Murray, *English Dramatic Companies*, vol.2, pp.119-20. For more discussion on the petition, see chapter 6.

<sup>127</sup> 'Paid to my Lorde of Leycesters plaiers xij of them the xxijth of September 1577.' See Peter Greenfield (ed.), 'REED, Southampton' (forthcoming).

<sup>128</sup> McMillin and MacLean, *The Queen's Men and their Plays*, p.21.

company.<sup>129</sup>

According to our database, Leicester's players had toured the provinces almost incessantly from 1588-9 onwards till the termination of the earl's patronage.<sup>130</sup> However, on reconstructing the tourings of the company, we find that between 1566-8 and 1582-4, the company had withdrawn from all major tourings: there are interruptions of touring the Kentish circuit in 1564-8, 1570-4, and 1581-6, the East Anglia circuit in 1566-70 and 1582-4, the Northern circuit in 1564-8, 1575-80, 1580-4, and the Western ones in 1562-9 and 1582-4.

The two blank periods are significant: 1566-8 was about the period when Leicester had gradually given up his hope of royal marriage, while 1582-4 covered the year in which the Queen's Men, which recruited most of the leading figures of Leicester's company, was founded. Following these two vacant periods of Leicester's Men's major tourings, we can divide the career of the company into three phases: 1558-1566, 1568-1582, and 1584-1588. These three periods contain very different characters. Before the mid-1560s, Leicester harboured great expectation for the royal marriage. As shown above, the earl applied all possible channels expressing his wishes to win the Queen's hand. The first phase therefore was also the period in which the earl was enthusiastic in patronising players to promote his marriage campaign.

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<sup>129</sup> For more discussion on the connection between Leicester's Men and London commercial theatres, see chapter. 6.

<sup>130</sup> The only exception was 1583 when no record of the company can be found.

The first London playhouse, the Theatre, was founded in 1576 by one of Leicester's players. The significance of the erection of the playhouse was not only in the building itself, but in that it proclaimed the coming of the era of the capital as the centre, and the only centre, of theatre. Leicester's Men later became one of the major troupes of the London playhouses. Transforming itself from a household company to a London-based commercial one, 1568-82 was the critical period for the company.

1583 was another crucial year for Leicester's Men. In that year, the Queen's Men was founded, and famous names of Leicester's troupe transferred to the new company. Without their most distinguished figures, Leicester's Men could no longer claim to be the 'first' company in the market. It returned to the London stage and to the provinces in 1584-5, but was to quite different a troupe.

The history of Leicester's Men is therefore interesting for our purposes, for it represented a typical propagandist company in the first phase, and a typical household-turned commercial troupe in the second. The transformation of Leicester's Men was indicative; it reveals not only the story of one important livery company, but also the fortune of the entire business of travelling performance. Acting companies continued to tour the country, but they spent most of their time in the capital whenever possible. Transformation shall be given more discussion in the concluding chapter. At the moment, the first phase of Leicester's players, 1558-1566, is our focus.

Some important aspects of Leicester's patronage in the first phase have already been scrutinised in our discussion above; the earl applied drama to promote his cause

and his players were part of his propagandist campaign. To discuss further Leicester's patronage of players in the first phase, it is important to understand, in the first place, his motives for sponsorship. Protestant attachment was believed by many scholars to be one major incentive for Leicester's patronage: MacLean points out that Dudley was a committed member of the reform circle; Collinson also mentions Dudley as the most important Protestant patron in England.<sup>131</sup>

Religion, however, was not Leicester's only concern. Although he was not a man without religious attachment, it appears that the earl would sometimes give his priority to other matters. One good example was Leicester's patronage of Westcote, the steadfast Catholic master of the boys of St. Paul's.<sup>132</sup> Regardless of the opposing religion held by his client, Leicester insisted on his protection over him. The earl's resolution caused the criticism from his Puritan proteges. John Field, for instance, wrote in 1581 to the earl revealing his uneasiness:

'I humbly beseech your honour to take heed how you give your hand either in evil causes or in the behalf of evil men, as of late you did for players to the great grief of all the godly. But as you have showed your forwardness for the ministry of the Gospel, so follow that course still. Our city hath been well eased of the [pestilence] of those wickednesses and abuses that were wont to be nourished by those impure interludes and plays that were in use, surely the schools of as great wickedness as can be. I trust your honour will herein join with them that have long out of the [Bible] cried out against them, and I am persuaded that if your honour knew what sinks of sin they are you would never look once towards them...'<sup>133</sup>

Field's letter is interesting, for on the one hand, it was written complaining

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<sup>131</sup> McMillin and MacLean, Queen's Men and their Plays, p.21. Collinson, Elizabethan Puritan Movement, pp. 48, 49 53.

<sup>132</sup> For Leicester's patronage of Westcote, see discussion above.

<sup>133</sup> This letter is preserved in Cotton MS. Titus B.VII, f.22 r. The quotation used here is based on Wilson's. See his Sweet Robin, p.158. Cf. Chambers, ES, vol.1, p.267 and vol.4, Appendix D, no.liv (p.284). Field was an important figure in the Protestant movement. For more of the person, see Collinson, Elizabethan Puritan Movement, pp.85-8.



about Leicester's support of 'evil men', on the other, it shows the increasing antipathy of the radicals towards theatre and players.<sup>134</sup> Wilson comments that Leicester's patronage of Westcote makes one suspect the earl's sincerity in supporting reformers; as a convinced Protestant yet he deliberately kept a Catholic in a position which would give him considerable influence over the tender minds of the young.<sup>135</sup> In fact, Westcote's case was not exceptional, for in the early years of Elizabeth's reign, Leicester's had sought for the help of the Catholics in promoting his royal marriage proposal.<sup>136</sup>

Certainly, Leicester was not a man without religion. However, spiritual affairs were not always his first concern. He had too many causes to promote, so sometimes he had to give other matters priority. And one of these more imminent issues was to restore his family name and influence. The Dudley house suffered a set-back when Robert's father failed to place his daughter-in-law securely on the English throne. As soon as Dudley entered the hub of political power, following Elizabeth's accession, he initiated a task to restore his family fortune.<sup>137</sup>

Restoring family estates, however, could only rebuild the wealth and the subsequent economic influence once enjoyed by the family; it could hardly amend the damaged family's reputation. The best way to achieve this aim, which would also

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<sup>134</sup> Puritans's hostility towards drama will be further discussed in the following chapter.

<sup>135</sup> Wilson, Sweet Robin, p.158.

<sup>136</sup> See Susan Doran, Monarchy and Matrimony, pp.46-7, 58-9. For more on Dudley's seeking Philip II's help to promote the marriage cause, see later discussion of the chapter.

<sup>137</sup> See Adams, 'The Dudley Clientele'.



help to develop Dudley's newly gained political influence, was patronage. Dudley's formation of an acting troupe was part of the endeavours. As McMillin and MacLean point out, the essential mandate of Dudley's company appears to be 'to tour as widely as possible.'<sup>138</sup> Such a practice is understandable, for carrying an obligation to refresh the disgraced family name, Dudley's men could not confine their touring to the more profitable circuits; they had to travel in fair weather and foul to clear their master's name.

Family reputation and influence certainly occupied the mind of Dudley in the early years. But in the first decade of Elizabeth's reign, the one thing that Dudley most eagerly promoted was his royal marriage proposal.<sup>139</sup> As shown in our discussion of *Gorboduc*, Dudley had tried to advance his cause through the performance before the Queen. The 1561 Christmas festivity however was not the only occasion when he had applied the method. In fact, between the death of Amy Dudley and the beginning of 1562, several literary works, possibly under Dudley's patronage, appeared to express arguments in favour of the match.<sup>140</sup>

One of them was Sir Thomas Smith's *Dialogue on the Queen's Marriage*.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> McMillin and MacLean, *Queen's Men and their Plays*, p.21.

<sup>139</sup> Dudley's searching for the Queen's hand was not contrary to his efforts of rebuilding the Dudley influence. As Wilson remarks, if Leicester wanted to continue enjoying prosperity, prestige and a large clientage (these were essential to family influence), he had to indulge Elizabeth. See Wilson, *Sweet Robin*, p.98. For a complete discussion of the issue of Elizabeth's marriage, see Doran, *Monarchy and Matrimony*.

<sup>140</sup> Doran, *ibid.*, p.52.

<sup>141</sup> Smith was a young diplomat who had recently quarrelled with Cecil. He wrote the piece, searching for Dudley as his new patron. *ibid.*, p.52.

Following the Renaissance convention of framing arguments in the form of a rhetorical conversation, the *Dialogue* discussed the relative merits of the Queen staying single, marrying a foreigner, or wedding an Englishman. And, as expected, marriage at home was the favoured option. Although Smith did not mention Dudley by name in the *Dialogue*, his discourse dismissed two arguments most usually raised against a Dudley match.<sup>142</sup> Smith's work was not printed at the time, but the *Dialogue* appears in many manuscript copies and was probably widely circulated at court.<sup>143</sup>

Another work preaching the Dudley match was John Philip's *The Play of Patient Grissell*.<sup>144</sup> Though the play was not licensed for public performance until sometime after July 1565, Susan Doran suggests that it appears to have been written sometime between late 1560 and 1561.<sup>145</sup> The plot was taken from a story in Chaucer and Boccaccio about a prince Gautier, who marries a peasant girl whom he truly loves. The contemporary references in the play to the queen and Dudley were clear. At the beginning of the story, Gautier, like Elizabeth, expresses his preference for a life of celibacy. Gautier's councillors, speaking for their English counterparts, in fear of the possible succession dispute, persuade the Prince to marry. When

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<sup>142</sup> The first one was disparagement for Elizabeth to marry a subject, and the second that it would lead to faction, since 'envy naturally kindleth amongst equals.' As to the former, Smith argued that as the kings of England suffered no disparagement when they had married a female subject, why should it be the case for Elizabeth to wed an English nobleman? Concerning factional strife, the writer claimed that a foreign marriage would have produced even larger dissension.

<sup>143</sup> Doran, *Monarchy and Matrimony*, pp.52-3.

<sup>144</sup> John Philip was a member of Queens' College, Cambridge, and author of various ballads, tracts, and elegies published between 1566 and 1591. Chambers, *ES*, vol.3, p.465.

<sup>145</sup> Doran, *Monarchy and Matrimony*, pp.53-4.

Gautier agrees to for the good of his kingdom, he, insisting on choosing his own spouse, selects a bride not of noble birth, but a maid of peasant stock, Grissell. The decision soon raises objections in the court. Grissell and Gautier, however, demonstrate by both their words and actions that the peasant girl was a worthy bride of the noble prince. In order to show that she is not an ambitious upstart, as Dudley was usually accused of being, Grissell urges the Prince to take another woman as his wife. Gautier, meanwhile, declares the virtues of his lover, which amounted to a defence of Dudley, who was usually accused that once king he would usurp the government and provoke factional unrest at court:

‘she feareth God, she dreads his name, she leads a Godly life,  
And dayly seketh for to subdue eontensyon and stryfe  
She will as dutie bynds, hir spoused mate obaye.’ (II.393-4)<sup>146</sup>

As supposed, the play ends as Gautier marries Grissell in the knowledge that ‘it shall not whit abase my state, nor minishe my renowne.’<sup>147</sup>

Although Dudley had tried hard to promote his royal marriage campaign, his future with Elizabeth was a complicated matter very much depending on external conditions. By the end of 1560, Dudley had recognised that he could no longer rely on his personal influence over the queen to realise his marriage proposal; he therefore turned to Philip II for help.<sup>148</sup> The marriage proposal once appeared to be quite feasible.<sup>149</sup> However, Dudley’s plan later proved to be a failure. On 28 April 1562,

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<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, p.55.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.53-5.

<sup>148</sup> Dudley wished that through the Spanish connection, he would be able to win over the religious conservatives within the English peerage like Norfolk, Arundel and Lord Howard of Effingham, who were long-standing friends of the Spanish king. See *ibid.*, p.46.

<sup>149</sup> Barely a week after Dudley’s courtship campaign in January 1562, he told de Quadra that his

some correspondence of de Quadra, the ambassador, revealed that the Spanish side was in fact against the marriage.<sup>150</sup> This disclosure made Elizabeth realise that a Dudley marriage would seriously damage her reputation, and the revelations about Dudley's intrigues with Catholic Spain rekindled suspicions amongst some English Protestants. As a consequence, Dudley's matrimonial proposal suffered a serious setback.<sup>151</sup>

During the late spring and summer of 1562, England was mostly occupied by the armed intervention in the French Religious Wars; the queen's marriage therefore slipped into the political background. Elizabeth's suffering of the small pox in early 1563 brought the issue back to focus. The councillors planned to raise the question of succession and the queen's marriage to the 1563 Parliament. De Quadra even reported that the Parliament meant to propose a petition supplicating the queen to marry Dudley.<sup>152</sup> The Parliament's approval for a Dudley match, however, came too late for Elizabeth; by 1563, the queen had no intention to take Dudley as her husband.<sup>153</sup> Although Dudley did not give up his hope to marry the queen, he had little chance of achieving his marital ambition after 1563.<sup>154</sup>

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matrimonial affairs were 'at a very good point'. *ibid.*, p.57.

<sup>150</sup> According to Doran, Cecil had for some time been bribing de Quadra's secretary, Borghese Venturini, to spy on his master. On 28 April 1562, Venturini made a statement which disclosed the extent of his master's communications with Dudley, relations with the English Catholics, and his unflattering descriptions of Elizabeth's indiscretions with Dudley. See *ibid.*, pp.58-9.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, p.59.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, p.60.

<sup>153</sup> When the parliament continued to press Elizabeth to marry a man of her own choice in late March 1563, she suggested to Scottish commissioners at her court that Dudley would make an excellent match to their queen. *ibid.*, p.64. For more about the 1563 Parliament, see *ibid.*, pp.60-4.

<sup>154</sup> Theatrical campaign for Dudley's courtship did not disappear after 1563. For instance, in

Dudley started his matrimonial campaign from early 1559 and had terminated it by the mid-1560s, if not earlier. During the period, he had applied several occasions and commissioned several theatrical performances to promote his interests. The first phase of Dudley's patronage of livery players also falls into this period of time. The termination of active touring of Leicester's players in around 1566 was certainly no coincidence. As Dudley spared no efforts to improve his image and family reputation, it is reasonable to assume that his players took part in the propaganda campaign. Although, as mentioned above, not a single play can be ascribed to Dudley's players prior to 1573 with certainty, it is very likely that plays such as *Gorboduc* and *Grissell* could have been amongst the troupe's repertory. Based on various evidences discussed above, it is therefore safe to argue that in the first phase of their profession, Dudley's company played an important role in their master's propagandist programme.

## **vi. Conclusion**

Religious and matrimonial campaigns were the two causes for the revival of propagandist companies in the first two decades of Elizabeth's reign. Cecil employed a tacit way to promote his faith. By contrast, Bedford, like most ardent Protestant patrons, never concealed his role in elevating the new religion. Dudley was a man with less religious concern; his campaign was aimed at the royal marriage. Like others, drama and patronage were the two means he widely used.

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Leicester's reception of Elizabeth's summer progress in 1575 to Kenilworth, there were several performances designed to put forward the matrimonial suit of the host. However, many literary critics believe that Leicester did not mean seriously a proposal of marriage. See *ibid.*, pp.67-72.

Propagandist drama returned to the stage in early Elizabeth's reign. But the queen's attitudes towards the genre, which was shown in her reaction to the Cambridge burlesque, had decided its future. The Cambridge attempt was a failure of advanced reformers, who tried to persuade the queen through this circuitous way. As a consequence, when the queen visited Oxford two years later, sensitive issues were kept out of the performance. De Silva, the Spanish ambassador who accompanying Elizabeth to the University, reported on 6 September 1566 to King Philip: 'In the various lectures, disputations, and comedies only ordinary matter have been treated, and nothing has been said about religion, except on the last occasion, when the subject was theology.'<sup>155</sup>

The failed persuasion of the Cambridge burlesque therefore was more indicative than merely an unsuccessful attempt of the advanced scholars. It shows the queen's apathy towards religious extremists and her loathing of her subjects' attempt to influence matters of the state. The self-disciplined reception carried by the Oxford authorities shows that the queen's message was received by the host; and it is reasonable to suppose that other advanced Protestant figures sooner or later also realised the queen's religious attitude and her determination not to be influenced. Although it would be too speculative to assume the dissolution of some Protestant playing companies in the mid-1560s, such as Suffolk's and Bedford's players, was a consequence of the queen's reaction to the Cambridge burlesque, it is reasonable to argue that the gradual realisation of the queen's opposition to radical religious movement was responsible for the decline of polemical drama and those companies

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<sup>155</sup> CSP, Spanish, Elizabeth, vol.1, p.578. Cf. Boas, University Drama, p.385.

carrying them.

The fortune of propagandist playing companies depended on the religious and political atmosphere of the time. When those conditions which had once required or supported the existence of these polemical companies no longer existed, the service of players became dispensable and the end of an era of livery players was forecast. This was the situation of itinerant companies after the 1580s. The decline of great households, the increasing control of the government over travelling, and the gradual settlement of the religious dispute all contributed to the decline of touring livery companies, and these are the main concern of the last chapter.

## Chapter 6: The Final Phase

'To the right honorable Earl of Leicester, their good Lord and Master.  
Maye yt please your honor to understande that forasmuche as there is a certayne Proclamacion out for the revivinge of a Statute as touchinge retayners, as your Lordshippe knoweth better than we can enformed you therof: We therfore, your humble Servaunts and deylle Orators your players, for avoydinge all inconvenients that maye growe by reason of the said Statute, are bold to trouble your Lordshippe with this our Suite, humblie desiringe your honor that (as you have bene alwayes our good Lord and Master) you will now vouchsaffe to reteyne us at this present as your household Servants and daylie wayters, not that we meane to crave any further stipend or benefite at your Lordshippes handes but our Lyveries as we have had, and also your honours License to certifye that we are your household Servauntes when we shall have occasion to travayle amongst our frendes as we do usuallie once a yere, and as other noble-mens Players do and have done in tyme past, Wherebie we maye enjoyed our facultie in your Lordshippes names as we have done hertofore. Thus beyng bound and readye to be alwayes at your Lordshippes Comandmente we committ your honor to the tuition of the Almightye.

Long may your Lordshippe live in peace,  
A pere of noblest peres:  
In health welth and prosperitie  
Redoubling Nestor's yeres.  
Your Lordshippes servaunts most bounden,

James Burbage,  
John Perkinne,  
John Lanham,  
Willm Johnson,  
Roberte Wilson,  
Thomas Clarke.'<sup>1</sup>

In 1572, Leicester's players, headed by James Burbage, wrote to their master, Robert Dudley, asking for his licence, which would allow them to perform in London and the provinces. The 'certayne Proclamacion' mentioned in the letter was the royal proclamation of 'Enforcing Statutes against Retainers' made on 3 January.<sup>2</sup> The

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<sup>1</sup> The letter was first transcribed by J.E. Jackson in *Notes and Queries*, 3rd ser., vol.11 (1867), p.350. The document can also be seen in E.K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, 4 vols. (Oxford, 1923, reprinted 1945), vol.2, p.86. John Murray, *English Dramatic Companies, 1558-1642*, 2 vols. (London, 1910), vol.2, pp.119-20.

<sup>2</sup> The proclamation was a consequence of the 1569 rebellion of the northern earls. For more about the background, see Peter Roberts, 'Elizabethan Players and Minstrels and the Legislation of 1572 against Retainers and Vagabonds', in *Religion, Culture, and Society in Early Modern Britain: Essays in Honour of Patrick Collinson* (eds.) Anthony Fletcher and Peter Roberts (Cambridge, 1994), p.31.



document announced that ‘the unlawful retaining of multitude of unordinary servants by liveries, badge, and other signs and tokens’ had endangered the security of the realm, therefore from 20 February onwards, only household servants were allowed to be kept and were exempt from the penalties of the law.<sup>3</sup>

The proclamation was not the only impediment faced by the company in the year. Accompanying the royal statement, there was a statute issued, the ‘Acte for the punishment of Vacabonde’ (14 Eliz., c.5),<sup>4</sup> which regulated the movement of itinerants. According to it, ‘all Fencers Bearewardes Comon Players in Enterludes & Ministrels, not belonging to any Baron of his Realm or towards any other honorable Personage of greater Degree...shall wander abroad and have not Lychense of two Justices of the Peace at the leaste, whereof one to be of the Quorum, when and in what Shier they shall happen to wander...shalbee taken and adjudged and deemed Roges Vacaboundes and Sturdy Beggars.’<sup>5</sup>

The Act was aimed to regulate the increasing migrant population at the time;<sup>6</sup> whereas the proclamation further restricted those who were qualified to wear a noble livery. The two 1572 ordinances had immediate influence on the acting business. On

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<sup>3</sup> Paul L. Hughes, and James F. Larkin (eds.), Tudor Royal Proclamations, 3 vols. (New Haven and London, 1969), vol.2 no.582. Cf. Roberts, ibid., p.31.

<sup>4</sup> The complete title of the statute was ‘An Acte for the Punishment of Vacabondes, and for the Relief of the Poore and Impotent.’ The Act was continued and amended in detail in 1576 (18 Eliz. c.3), and continued in 1584-5 (37 Eliz. c.11). See Chambers, ES, vol.4, p.269.

<sup>5</sup> Andrew Gurr, The Shakespearian Playing Companies (Oxford, 1996), pp.36-7. Chambers, ibid., pp.269-70.

<sup>6</sup> Peter Roberts has given a quite detailed discussion on the process of the formation of the 1572 statute. See his ‘Elizabethan Players’, p.33-42.

the one hand, the Act required all common players to have a noble patron, while on the other, the proclamation confined legitimate retainers to house servants only. Burbage's letter, which beseeched the earl to appoint them as household servants (they already wore Leicester's livery), was meant to meet the requirements of the two regulations.<sup>7</sup> As no licence authorised by Leicester is extant, there is no direct evidence showing that Burbage's request was fulfilled. But as Leicester had always been helpful and the company continued to tour the country after 1572, it is reasonable to believe that a licence was granted to them.

In 1574, the company was given another favour—a patent, which permitted them to perform in London and the provinces. On 10 May of that year, a licence was given to James Burbage and his company, informing 'all Iustices, Mayors, Sheriffes, Bylyffes, head Constables, vnder Constables, and all other our officers and mynisters gretinge' that the queen had licensed and authorised

'oure lovinges Subiectes, Iames Burbage, Iohn Perkyn, Iohn Lanham, William Iohnson, and Roberte Wilson, seruauntes to oure trustie and welbeloued Cosen and Counseyllor the Earle of Leycester, to vse, exercise, and occupie the arte and facultye of playenge Comedies, Tragedies, Enterludes, stage playes, and such other like as they haue alredie vsed and studied, or hereafter shall vse and studie, aswell for the recreacion of oure loving subiectes, as for oure solace and pleasure when we shall thincke good to see them, as also to vse and occupie all such Instrumentes as they haue alredie practised, or hereafter shall practise, for and during our pleasure.'

The players were permitted to perform their art 'within oure Citie of London and liberties of the same, as also within the liberties and fredomes of anye oure Cities, townes, Bouroughes &c whatsoeuer as without the same, thoroughte oure Realme of England' without the hindrance of any act, statute, proclamation, or commandment.

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<sup>7</sup> Peter Roberts argues that the letter was very likely written between 3 January and 20 February to meet the stipulated date for the imposition of the Proclamation. See Roberts, *ibid.*, p.31. Cf. Chamber, *ES*, vol.2, p.86.

But there were certain conditions added to the patent. Their repertory must first be censored.

‘the said Commodies, Tragedies, enterludes, and stage playes be by the master of oure Revells for the tyme beyng before sene & allowed.’

And there should be no performance in the time of divine service or during the plague.

‘and that the same be not published or shewen in the tyme of common prayer, or in the tyme of greate and common plague in oure said Citye of London.’<sup>8</sup>

In many respects, Leicester’s company was distinct from most acting troupes. Being the entertainers of Elizabeth’s favourite courtier, they enjoyed much more privilege. The two 1572 regulations proved to have caused little trouble to the troupe, whereas the 1574 patent shows that it was the first company that was able to procure such royal protection. Although Leicester’s Men was distinguished in many ways from their fellowmen, the precarious conditions they faced in the 1570s were shared by other livery companies. The 1572 petition and 1574 patent, which were in response to the contemporary difficulties, are worthy of further discussion.

The first question of interest brought out by the two documents was the subtle relationship between acting companies and the City of London. On the one hand, conventional travelling troupes founded the London stage, which achieved an unprecedented success; but on the other, the prosperity of playing in the Capital also increased the tension between the acting business and the City authorities. Take Leicester’s Men as an example. There were six players in their petition letter of 1572. The composition remained almost the same in 1574, except that Thomas Clark was

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<sup>8</sup> Chambers, *ibid.*, vol.2, pp.87-8, *Malone Collection*, vol.1, pt.3 (London, 1909), pp.262-3.

missed from the patent. Scrutinising the careers of these five players, we found that many of them had close connections with London playhouses. Burbage, the leading man, was the builder of the first London playhouse, the Theatre; Laneham and Johnson were amongst those recruited to the Queen's Men, a company active in the capital after 1583; and Wilson was not only an actor but also a productive playwright, who had written famous pieces, including *The Three Ladies of London* series, for various London companies.<sup>9</sup>

Apart from the fact that individual Leicester's players were active on the London stage, the company itself also set an example for the later London-based troupes; it was one of the earliest troupes that settled at a venue for a considerable period of time.<sup>10</sup> Following the same pattern, players of other noblemen also settled themselves at the capital; Lord Chamberlain's company, for instance, repeatedly performed at the Rose.<sup>11</sup> The emergence of permanent venues in the capital for major playing companies was a significant development in the history of English theatre; it shows that acting companies started to shift from habitual travelling to habitual residence in London. This transformation proceeded gradually. In the beginning, only those leading troupes, which secured a venue in the capital, spent more time, could

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<sup>9</sup> For more about these players, see Chambers, *ibid.*, pp.306-7, 324, 328, 349-50. By 1594, Wilson had retired from the regular stage, and turned to the writing of plays. According to Henslowe's accounts, during 1598, Wilson collaborated in a number of plays for the Admiral's men. See Edwin Nungezer, A Dictionary of Actors and of Other Persons Associated with the Public Representation of Plays in England before 1642 (London, 1929), pp.394-6.

<sup>10</sup> As Chambers points out, Burbage's Theatre provided a valuable head-quarter of the company in London. They probably had occupied the playhouse at any rate in summer until 1583. See his *ES*, vol.2, p.88 and n.1.

<sup>11</sup> They performed at the Rose from December 27, 1593 to February 6, 1594, and reappeared between April 1 to 8, 1594. See Murray, English Dramatic Companies, vol.1, p.302.

possibly spend more time in London. But gradually, more and more troupes, including the minor ones, preferred and were able to settle down in the city and only toured the country when the venues in the capital were not available.<sup>12</sup>

The petition also reveals the increasing hostility of the City of London against the acting profession. The capital had always been in tension with public performance. A 'Proclamation for the Abolishment of Interludes' issued by the City authority in 1545 clearly demonstrated the pressing problems caused by the stage. The proclamation first illustrated the increasing prevalence of drama in the capital,

'...fforasmuche as by reason and Occasyon of the manyfold and sundrye Enterludes and co(mm)en Playes that nowe of late dayes have been by dyvers and sondrye p(er)sones more co(m)monly and besyllye [busily] set foorthe and played [than] heretofore hathe bene accustomed'

As many performances were carried out in the times of church services, specific occasions on which no plays should be given were announced:

'...no suche playes ought to be played And that namelye & cheiffelye upon the Sondaye & other hallydayes in the tyme of Evensonge & other devyne s(er)vice Celebrate...'

And as play performance had seduced city youth and those 'idle and evylle disposed persones' from their duties, the revenues were also restricted:

'...his highnes therfore straitlye Chargethe & co(m)maundethe that no maner of p(er)son or p(er)sones from hensforthe of what soever estate degree or Condi(i)on he or they be of presueme or taken upon hym or them at any tyme hereafter to playe or set foorthe or cause to be played any maner of Enterlude or co(mm)en playe w(i)thin any maner of place or places of this his grace(e)s said Citie. Onles it be in the houses of noble men or of the lorde Maire Shryves or aldermen of the same his highnes Citie for the tyme beinge Orels in the houses of gentelmen or of the substancyall & sad Co(mm)iners or hed p(ar)isssheners of the same Citie or in the open stret(e)s of the said citie as in tyme paste in hathe bene used & accustomed or

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<sup>12</sup> See Gurr, The Shakespearian Playing Companies, p.29.

in the co(mm)en hall(e)s of the Companyes felowshipps or brotherhedd(e)s of the same Citie.<sup>13</sup>

Violation of divine service, inducement to vice and idleness, corruption of youth, and threat to an orderly commonwealth were the accusations given by the city authorities against public performance. The 1545 proclamation, however, was an application of the Act of 1543, which denounced performances against the true religion;<sup>14</sup> it set up the major anti-theatrical arguments, which justified suppression for the next hundred years. London was not the only place where anti-drama prejudice was harboured; similar opinion was gradually taken by the rest of the country in the second half of the sixteenth century. And such sentiment was believed to have contributed to the decline and the final termination of the business of travelling players.

The two documents of Leicester's Men also reveal the tension, if not the struggle, between the City of London and the Court. Earlier historians of theatre, such as J.P. Collier and F.G. Fleay, believed that the parliamentary statute against vagabonds in 1572 was a milestone in the development of English theatre for it originated the first royal patent issued to players in 1574. Recent historians are more cautious. William Ingram, for instance, argues that the patent granted to Leicester's Men in 1574 was not in response to the Act of 1572, as the players, whose patron was an earl, were not subject to its provisions.<sup>15</sup> Peter Roberts, following Ingram's

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<sup>13</sup> Glynne Wickham, *Early English Stages, 1300 to 1600*, 3 vols. (London, 1963), vol.2, pt.1, pp.327-8. Cf. Norman Sanders, *etc.* (eds.), *The Revels History of Drama in English*, vol.II: 1500-1576 (London, 1980), pp.25-6.

<sup>14</sup> For more about governmental intervention into theatre, see chapter 1.

<sup>15</sup> William Ingram, *The Business of Playing* (London, 1992), p.121.

argument, asserts that the 1574 patent was granted to protect the company from the prosecution not from the parliament but from the City authorities.<sup>16</sup>

Roberts' argument reveals an important point; that is the antagonism between the City and the Court towards theatrical performance. As Williams observes, 'courtly patrons were essential to the acting companies, for whom they provided protection against the law and against the enemies of the theatre in Elizabethan London.'<sup>17</sup> The City authorities were the enemy of players, whereas the court the protector. The reality, however, was not as simple as it appeared. London's animosity towards players was not without cause. As the 1545 city proclamation shows, inducement to vice and idleness and threat to public order were both proper reasons for the authorities to renounce public performance. The concern of the City was not contrary to the interest of the Crown; although entertainment was vital to the spectacular lifestyle of the court, public order certainly was more essential. The adverse attitudes held by the city and the court were in fact an extension of increasing confrontation between local and central authorities. In other words, the Court's protection of players from civic prosecution was not an action motivated by the Crown's affection for the art, but by the central government's determination to establish its authority over the city council.<sup>18</sup>

Apart from the players' relationship with the city and the power struggle which grew from it, the two documents also raise the question concerning the patron-

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<sup>16</sup> Roberts, 'Elizabethan Players', pp.45-6.

<sup>17</sup> Penry Williams, *The Later Tudors: England 1547-1603* (Oxford, 1995), p.408.

<sup>18</sup> For more about the struggle between the Court and the City, see Chambers, *ES*, vol.1, ch.9.



company relationship. Williams comments on the 1572 petition letter of Burbage asserting that it was written to seek protection for his 'newly formed company'.<sup>19</sup> In Williams' opinion, the Leicester's Men led by Burbage in 1572 was a new one. The relation between Leicester's Men and their patron however was much more complicated than Williams believes.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Leicester's Men entered the second phase of its career in around 1568. Although before 1583, when its leading actors were recruited to the Queen's Men, it remained the most active company on the road, its relation to the earl was undergoing a transformation during the period: they gradually converted from Leicester's personal servants to fairly independent performers. It is difficult to settle a precise time for such change, but the establishment of the Theatre in 1576 can be considered as a landmark. As Chambers points out, after the erection of the playhouse, the company probably had spent a certain part of their summer performing there.<sup>20</sup>

The petition letter of 1572 also confirmed such transformation. In the letter, Burbage asserted that their wish to be retained as Leicester's servants was not meant to 'crave any further stipend or benefite at your Lordshippes handes' but for the liveries and a licence for their travels. In traditional patronage, a wage was an important part of the operation.<sup>21</sup> During the Reformation era, most noble players, as

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<sup>19</sup> Williams, *The Later Tudors*, p.408.

<sup>20</sup> Chambers, *ES*, vol.2, p.88 and n.1.

<sup>21</sup> This can be further proved by the fact that writers usually sought for financial supports from their patron.



White argues, were only semi-professional; out of economic necessity, they combined playing with some other trade in their master's household.<sup>22</sup> They also toured the provinces regularly when not wanted. But they did not consider performance outside the household their major engagement; they performed to the public, yet they were still household servants and the noble household was the centre of their lives. Even though the payment given may not be enough for a proper living, they never considered their household 'wage' dispensable.<sup>23</sup>

The information conveyed by Burbage's petition, however, was quite different from this custom. Burbage and the players still required the livery of the master, but they no longer asked for allowance from the earl. The emergence of a secure London market certainly made players more independent from their patron, particularly in finance. According to the statement of John Stockwood, master of Tonbridge Grammar School, by 1577 London-based companies earned a combined income of £2000 per year from performing several times a week in eight regular venues in the city.<sup>24</sup> This economic independence certainly brought London troupes more freedom than they used to have.

Leicester's Men, for example, apparently enjoyed more autonomy by the mid-1570s. But, as White remarks, despite the economic independence enjoyed by

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<sup>22</sup> Paul W. White, Theatre and Reformation: Protestantism, Patronage, and Playing in Tudor England (Cambridge, 1993), p.165.

<sup>23</sup> For more about lives of livery players, see chapter 1.

<sup>24</sup> Chambers, ES, vol.4, p.200. Cf. White, Theatre and Reformation, p.165. M.C. Bradbrook, The Rise of the Common Player: A Study of Actor and Society in Shakespeare's England (Cambridge, 1962), p.70.

London troupes, politically powerful patrons could still exercise considerable influence on the major companies.<sup>25</sup> The relation between Leicester's Men and their master thus remained more than nominal. It is believed by many theatre historians that Leicester's Men might have performed in the earl's reception of the queen at Kenilworth castle in 1575. M.C. Bradbrook, for instance, argues that it is fairly certain that Leicester's company was at the castle on Sunday, 17 July, as Laneham's letter told that

'after supper waz thear a play preztented of a very good theam, but so set foorth by the Actoourz wel handling, that pleazure and mirth made it seeme very short, though it lasted too good ourz and more.'<sup>26</sup>

Leicester's Men experienced a reorganisation between 1582-4; many eminent actors transferred to the Queen's Company. The remaining crew, however, continued to serve the earl. In 1585-6, for instance, they accompanied the earl to the Netherlands. In appearance, in 1586, Leicester's Men was certainly a household troupe, for they travelled with their master abroad. This however was only part of the story. In around 1585, Leicester's company split into two: when the one led by William Kemp performed in the continent, the other one continued to tour the provinces. In other words, in 1585-6, Leicester's players were both 'household' and 'commercial'.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> White, *ibid.*, p.165.

<sup>26</sup> Two accounts of the Queen's visit to Kenilworth survive. One was written by George Gascoigne, the other by an anonymous writer. The latter is usually known as Laneham's Letter. According to the quotation cited by Bradbrook, the Letter did not show directly that Leicester's Men was the one that performed on 17 July. But Bradbrook reasonably argued that 'Leicester's Men would have felt very ill used had the Earl invited any players than his own to give this performance.' See his *The Rise of the Common Player*, pp.143-4.

<sup>27</sup> The members of Leicester's company later rejoined with those left behind when they returned to England. Kemp, for instance, returned to England in the autumn of 1586, and joined the company's touring. See Murray, *English Dramatic Companies*, vol.1, pp.34-5

The story of Leicester's players shows that the connection between a patron and his acting company was a complicated one. Earlier scholars believed that this relation was 'little more than a nominal one';<sup>28</sup> but recent scholars have found that the link was much stronger than was once assumed.<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless, during the course of the sixteenth century, the tie between patron and his players was loosened. Leicester never entirely cut off his connection with the players, but many other companies seem to have retained only a nominal relation with their master.<sup>30</sup>

The business of traditional livery players rose in the 1530s when the Reformation ensued, and it is widely believed that they had passed their heyday by the end of the sixteenth century. Although acting companies wearing a noble livery did not disappear from the stage, they had shifted, in Andrew Gurr's words, from 'habitual travelling to habitual residence in London.'<sup>31</sup> The formation of a permanent market in London was one major cause, and the changed relationship between patron and company was its consequence. Gurr argues that by the beginning of the seventeenth century, or by the reign of Charles I at the latest, the decline of touring companies was clear.

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<sup>28</sup> Chambers, *ES*, vol.1, pp.270-1. Cf. the introductory section of chapter 2.

<sup>29</sup> See chapter 2.

<sup>30</sup> Even Leicester's Men had lost their bond with their master's household after the earl's death. When Leicester died in September 1588, several of his principal players joined the Strange-Chamberlain's men, and the remnant of the company sought another patron. They were not recruited to the company of the earl of Essex, Robert Devereux, Leicester's successor. See Murray, *English Dramatic Companies*, vol.1, p.36.

<sup>31</sup> Gurr, *The Shakespearian Playing Companies*, p.29.

The London companies on the whole travelled less frequently than they did under Elizabeth, and some of the London troupes even sponsored duplicate companies to travel for them.<sup>32</sup> Although it is generally accepted by scholars that by 1642, when London playhouses were forced to close, the transformation of the role of livery players from household servants to independent performers had been completed, there is no settled conclusion about when and why this transformation happened. 1580 to 1603 was the last phase of Elizabeth's reign. As it was also the formative period of the London theatres, a scrutiny of the playing of the time can certainly contribute to our understanding of the development of the acting profession. What happened to livery players in the period and why it happened are the two major concerns of this chapter.

### **i. The Termination of the Era of Travelling Players**

It is widely believed by historians of theatre that the Elizabethan period witnessed two major developments in English theatre: the birth of the London stage and the termination of the travelling business. There are fewer debates about the first of these, for the history of various playhouses is definitely dated and theatrical performances in the capital were comparatively well documented. It is more difficult to be precise about the decline of the travelling performances.

Earlier scholars believed that the early years of Elizabeth's reign witnessed the termination of propagandist drama, a medium widely applied to promote the new religion. Chambers, for example, argues that the close alliance between the protestant

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<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p.38.

preaching and the stage continued into the opening years of Elizabeth's reign, but was soon dissolved thereafter. In 1564, Bishop Grindal wrote to Cecil in favour of the permanent inhibition of the 'historiones, common playours', that 'idle sorte off people, which have ben infamouse in all goode common weales.'<sup>33</sup> Norman Sanders, who holds similar opinions, asserts that early Elizabethan stage legislation, such as the 1559 proclamation, which objected to licences being granted to those plays dealing with religious or political matters, seriously damaged the acting business, which had much to do with the state propaganda. David Bevington also argues that as the religious controversy waned in the 1560s, drama turned from theology to social and economic problems, and especially to external problems such as the threat of cheap foreign labour.<sup>34</sup>

Recently, however, theatre historians have tended to believe that the final phase of propagandist drama did not come until 1580. Paul White, for instance, argues that, whatever the original purpose behind the 1559 proclamation was,<sup>35</sup> the legislation turned out to be not an impediment but a protection to the Protestant drama which promoted the national religious policy.<sup>36</sup> Besides, a clear-cut division between 'Lutheran' and 'Calvinist' ideas towards drama held by the generation of scholars

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<sup>33</sup> Chambers, *ES*, vol.1, p.244. Cf. pp.242-5.

<sup>34</sup> David Bevington, *Tudor Drama and Politics: A Critical Approach to Topical Meaning* (Cambridge, M.A., 1968), pp.128-9.

<sup>35</sup> White believes that it was made under the pressure from foreign dignitaries who felt offended by plays attacking the Papacy and Catholic monarchs. See White, *Theatre and Reformation*, p.59.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.59-60.

like Chambers is now considered questionable.<sup>37</sup> White believes that real anti-theatrical crisis did not come into view until the 1580s.

His argument is based on Patrick Collinson's observation. Collinson argues that in around 1580, roughly equivalent to the first ascendancy of Puritanism, English society experienced a 'second Reformation': the 'iconoclastic' urge to reform unacceptable images was replaced by an 'iconophobic' rejection of all visual, dramatic, and musical forms. Among all forms of visual presentation, drama, which had served as a polemical weapon in the first phase of the Reformation, was the one encountering most vigorous rejection; it was labelled by the Protestants as secular and profane and to be eradicated from the society.<sup>38</sup> Following Collinson's periodisation, White argues that there does not appear to have been any Crown interference with Protestant religious drama until the later 1580s.<sup>39</sup> The more distinct action was in 1589 when a licensing commission was formed by the Archbishop of Canterbury to 'strike out' passage in play books dealing with matters of church and state.

The fate of travelling players had much to do with the religious controversy of the Tudor period. Their business boosted in the 1530s, when the Reformation had

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<sup>37</sup> For more about White's argument on this point, see *ibid.*, pp.3-5.

<sup>38</sup> Patrick Collinson, 'From Iconoclasm to Iconophobia: the cultural impact of the Second English Reformation', in Peter Marshall (ed.), *The Impact of the English Reformation 1500-1640* (London, 1997), pp.278-308. This article is reprinted from *The Stenton Lecture* (Reading, 1985). See also his *The Birthpangs of Protestant England: religious and cultural change in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries* (London, 1988), p.98.

<sup>39</sup> White points out that there is not a single instance of Protestant religious drama creating problems for the Elizabethan authorities during the 1570s. See his *Theatre and Reformation*, p.165.

made their propagandist service required. Mary's anti-Protestant policy had caused an ebb of their career in the mid-1550s. Their fortunes, however, improved when Elizabeth came to the throne and the religious polemics were once again needed. Although religion was not the only cause that players tried to promote, it was certainly one of the most important.<sup>40</sup> Governmental and public attitudes towards religious polemics therefore had much influence on the fortune of livery players: the decline of Protestant propaganda, which occupied a major proportion of all polemical works, in other words, would certainly have caused the degeneration of the travelling business. Sanders argues that the year 1559 witnessed a continual, if not rapid, decline of religious polemics, while White believes that the fatal blow had come much later. Chapters 4 and 5 of this thesis demonstrate that polemical drama did not cease to exist soon after the opening of Elizabeth's reign. But did the 1580s witness the disappearance of Tudor propagandist campaign and the decline of travelling players who carried the polemical materials? In the following section, a scrutiny of the travelling records of livery players in the last two decades of the sixteenth century will be given. The result may help to provide an answer.

There are 1220 entries of travelling players in the last two decades of the century: 621 in the 1580s and 599 in the 1590s. Compared to earlier decades, acting companies appeared to have done remarkable work during the period: there are 151 entries in the 1550s (the lowest number since the Reformation), 475 in the 1560s, and 440 in the 1570s.<sup>41</sup> According to these figures, it appears that travelling companies did not suffered a serious setback in the 1580s or even in the 1590s, as many scholars

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<sup>40</sup> See chapters 4 and 5.

<sup>41</sup> For a complete data and discussion on the entries of performers in the Tudor period, see chapter 1.

argue; on the contrary, they even achieved an unprecedented success in these twenty years.

This first impression however can be misleading, for peculiar factors have contributed to this achievement and should be considered. The first one was the formation of Queen's Men in 1583.<sup>42</sup> Elizabeth's new acting company, which recruited leading players of the time, began to tour the country from around the mid-1580s. They were very active ever since their formation. By the end of the decade, they had contributed 141 entries in total,<sup>43</sup> and their entry number increased to 191 in the 1590s, almost one third of the entire entry amount of the decade. Elizabeth's troupe was in essence different from traditional household companies patronised by noblemen; it was sponsored by the queen, whose authority guaranteed a warm reception from local authorities. To avoid distortion, therefore, our discussion of the development of household players should be confined to those under the patronage of noblemen.<sup>44</sup>

There is, however, another element that should be considered before any further discussion can be pursued; that is the role of London-based companies. Since the emergence of a more secure London acting market, leading acting companies began to spend most of the year and eventually settled down in the capital. By the

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<sup>42</sup> Before the formation of Queen's Men in 1583, there are court interluders succeeded from the previous monarchs.

<sup>43</sup> There is in total 142 entries of Elizabeth's players in the 1580s. But one of them belongs to 1580-1, before the formation of the 'new' troupe. It is excluded from present figure.

<sup>44</sup> Regional companies, whose performance had dwindled to a marginal role, were not included in present discussion. For more discussion on this group of acting troupes, see chapter 3 and later section of this chapter.



end of the sixteenth century, there were eight major playing troupes which performed regularly in the playhouses: Leicester's, Warwick's, Worcester's, Sussex's, Lord Admiral's, Strange/Chamberlain's, Oxford's, and Pembroke's Men.<sup>45</sup> As the focus of our present concern is the post-1580 period, Warwick's players, whose commercial life was short and terminated at the very beginning of the 1580s, should be excluded from the discussion.<sup>46</sup> A survey shows that the remaining seven companies contributed an impressive amount of entries between 1580 and 1600: 394 records in total, which amounts to 42% of the entries of noble companies of the period. The nature of these commercial troupes was distinct from that of traditional household ones, who were the mainstream of customary itinerant performers. Included the entries of these London troupes in our discussion will certainly distort our understanding of the changing fortune of travelling players in the century.

Dismissing the entries for the Queen's Men and the leading London companies, entry numbers belonging to household troupes appear to be more reasonable. Instead of being 440 in the 1570s, 621 in the 1580s, and 599 in the 1590s,<sup>47</sup> the modified figures should be 330, 292 and 261 respectively. These figures compared to those of previous decades are less impressive: 106 in the 1540s, 93 in the 1560s, and 333 in the 1560s.<sup>48</sup> As these numbers reveal, the peak time of

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<sup>45</sup> The former four companies were household-turned London companies. Whereas the business of the later four did not begin until the emergence of London stage.

<sup>46</sup> The only touring record of Warwick's company in the post-1580 was a payment of 15s made at Ipswich.

<sup>47</sup> 440, 621 and 599 are entry numbers of all (regional, noble, and royal) playing companies in the decade. Records of household companies contribute only part of the entire number.

<sup>48</sup> Before the mid-1570s, there is no London-based commercial playing company; all noble troupes were in essence household-based. These figures are therefore taken from the entry amount of noble companies in each decade.

household players was in the 1560s, the first ten years of Elizabeth's reign. Their entry number, which reflected the condition of their business, decreased gradually as time went by; by the last decade of the century, their business had dwindled to less than 80% of the level in the 1560s. The decline of the travelling trade was evident, but there was no drastic decline or dramatic termination of their travelling in either the 1580s or the 1590s. The disappearance of players on the road progressed only gradually.

The rise of travelling players in the 1530s benefited from the propagandist campaign embarked on at the Reformation; as a more efficient media in disseminating ideas, players surpassed minstrels becoming the most important, and later the only important, type of performers on the road. Collinson argues that 1580 was the watershed of Protestant views of drama; White asserts that by the 1580s, Elizabeth's government had shifted from passive consent to active interference with propagandist performance, and our survey of existing play titles suggests that by 1580 polemical plays, if not having disappeared entirely, clearly gave way to works with less topical meanings.<sup>49</sup> Apparently, livery players survived, though less and less comfortably, the changing attitudes of the 1580s.

The trade of travelling players was not terminated in the 1580s, but they did experience a progressive degeneration in the last few decades of the century. The increasing uneasiness of the Protestant camp towards drama certainly contributed to their declining business, but it was not the only factor that determined the fate of itinerant troupes. The reason for the decline and final termination of the activity of

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<sup>49</sup> For more about the play titles in the sixteenth century, see chapter 1.

travelling players was much more complicated a question than has been recognised by scholars. Instead of being considered simply as a natural development in theatre history, a result of the emergence of London stage, it must also be seen in broader historical perspective. In the following section, an attempt is made to illustrate the connection between the decline of travelling players and its political, economic, and cultural context.

## **ii. Traditional Explanations for the Termination**

Increasing governmental control, anti-theatrical prejudice, and the emergence of London stage are the three most widely accepted factors that caused the decline of the travelling business. As shown in the beginning of the chapter, in around 1572, Leicester's players encountered much tighter governmental regulations towards touring, which made them turn to their patron for help. The 1572 ordinances however were not new installations. From the early time of the Tudor regime, government had tried to install some control over theatrical performance.

In 1543, for instance, a statute was issued forbidding the playing of interludes which contained matter contrary to the teaching of the Church. A proclamation of the following year prohibited the performance of any interludes of plays outside the houses of noblemen, gentlemen, and London officials, or beyond the streets traditionally used for them. The more radical regime of Protector Somerset began to suppress the Feast of Corpus Christi, and Mary maintained a similar system of regulation, though operating in the reverse direction.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Penry Williams, The Tudor Regime (Oxford, 1979), pp.306-7.

Elizabeth's government was initially content to leave the control of dramatic performances in the hands of county officials and Justice of Peaces.<sup>51</sup> A stricter regulation upon the content of plays was issued in 1559. The Privy Council announced a prohibition of plays that treated 'either matters of religion or of the governance of the estate of the commonweal...being no meet matters to be writeen or treated upon but by men of authority...nor to be handled before any audience but of grave and discreet persons.'<sup>52</sup> The 1559 Injunction though severe in content is generally considered by scholars as causing no fatal harm to the acting business. David Bevington, for instance, argues that the ordinance was in fact a double game played by Elizabeth to assuage the complaints from foreign ambassadors.<sup>53</sup>

Whether government's interference was strictly enforced or not, travelling players nevertheless did experience more and more rejection in the later part of Elizabeth's reign. The city of Chester, for example, maintained its policy of refusing admission or payment at any time to the professional visiting companies from the 1570s. According to the Chester records, the only gratuities given to travelling acting troupes were made by the Dean and Chapter of the Cathedral, and Queen Elizabeth's company was the only one that was granted access.<sup>54</sup> When the earl of Derby, Chester's local lord, wrote to the major in 1606 asking if Hertford's company, which

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<sup>51</sup> See the proclamation of 16 May 1559. For the complete document, see Andrew Gurr, The Shakespearian Playing Companies, p.37 n.4. Chambers, ES, vol.4, pp.263-4.

<sup>52</sup> Hughes and Larkin (ed.), Tudor Royal Proclamations, vol.2, no.458. Cf. Williams, The Tudor Regime, p.307.

<sup>53</sup> Bevington, Tudor Drama and Politics, p.128.

<sup>54</sup> Gurr, The Shakespearian Playing Companies, pp.5-6.

had performed in Derby's household at Lathom and was due to return there for Christmas, could play in the meantime at the Chester town hall, his request was ignored.<sup>55</sup> The city corporation passed regulations in 1596 and in 1615 prohibiting any performance carried by visiting companies within its jurisdiction.<sup>56</sup>

The increasing frustration experienced by travelling companies was greatly attributed to the tightening official policy towards strolling; this factor, however, did not explain the whole condition. Increasing hostility towards theatrical performance all over the country was another cause contributing to the unhappy experience of players. The complaint letter written by John Field to his patron is a good example.<sup>57</sup> In fact, as Gurr points out, apart from London, almost every other large town came routinely to show a broad-based hostility towards itinerant troupes: municipal authorities either banned visits by the playing companies, or turned them away without playing. Playgoing in London becomes a peculiarly isolated phenomenon.<sup>58</sup>

The anti-theatrical sentiment revealed by Gurr had close connection with the religious development within the realm. As White asserts, the Protestant consensus in favour of the theatre, which had promoted the travelling business of players since the Reformation, broke up around the midpoint of Elizabeth's reign.<sup>59</sup> The positive

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<sup>55</sup> Lawrance M. Clopper (ed.), REED, Chester (Toronto, 1979), pp.lviii-lix, 219.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., pp.184, 292-3. Other towns, such as Norwich, also carried similar policy. From 1589 onwards, the Norwich authorities often refused to grant permission for players to perform in the town. See Gurr, The Shakespearian Playing Companies, p.6.

<sup>57</sup> For Field's letter, see chapter 5. See also Derek Wilson, Sweet Robin: A Biography of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester 1533-1588 (London, 1981), p.158.

<sup>58</sup> Gurr, The Shakespearian Playing Companies, p.5.

<sup>59</sup> White, Theatre and Reformation, xiii.

attitude towards theatre once carried by earlier reformers, such as Martin Bucer, was gradually disclaimed by Protestants of the next generation. In their opinion, the subject-matter of the majority of plays was immoral and was written to amuse and corrupt spectators other than to exhort them to virtue and righteous living.<sup>60</sup> One visible phenomenon illustrating this increasing anti-theatrical attitude was that a good many Protestant playwrights, including William Wager and Ulpian Fulwell, gradually alienated themselves from the theatrical profession in the 1570s.<sup>61</sup>

White argues that Protestants' anti-theatre sentiments can be largely attributed to the establishment of the London stage. The commercial nature of the playhouses made it difficult for sober-minded Protestants to justify the existence of the popular stage on the ground that it promoted their ethical and religious convictions.<sup>62</sup> London stage did affect the trade of theatrical performance. Apart from its generation of anti-theatrical prejudice, it also invited acting companies to abandon their touring custom, settling in the capital. Gurr, for example, asserts that London gradually became the foothold of travelling players. From the early 1560s onwards, travelling troupes belonging to great lords began to offer their plays at court and in London with some regularity. They used temporary footholds, either city inns, innyards, or the specially built amphitheatres for stays. In the 1590s, the leading companies finally secured their own purposed-built playhouses for their performance.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p.173. Cf. Bradbrook, *The Rise of the Common Player*, chapter 3.

<sup>61</sup> White, *ibid.*, pp.165-6.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p.166.

<sup>63</sup> Gurr, *The Shakespearian Playing Companies*, pp.4-5.

This transformation was due in large part to the special attraction of London. The capital provided playing companies with bigger audiences and a much bigger income; it offered opportunities to perform at court; and the city commanded incomparable attendant resources. London doubled its size between 1550 and 1650; by the latter date, its population of 400,000 people made it the largest and possibly the richest city in Europe. No other city regularly visited by the travelling companies could match it; Norwich, Bristol, Coventry and other major cities never had more than 20,000 people in their urban parishes. Only London was large enough in population to make it beneficial for acting troupes to stay a longer length of time.<sup>64</sup>

Apart from the economic advantages that London provided, the City also surpassed other cities in that it provided a protection from the court which players could not enjoy in the rest of the country. When the anti-theatrical sentiments flourished in the various corners of the country, London authorities also adopted an antagonistic position towards players.

### **iii. Other Explanations for the Termination**

Governmental interference, anti-theatrical sentiments, and the emergence of London stage were certainly factors causing the decline of the travelling business; they were not isolated from other major transformations proceeding in the period however. To understand fully the termination of the era of the itinerant players, the historical context should also be investigated.

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<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p.19. According to figures given by Peter Clark and Paul Slack, the population of the three towns in 1603 were 15,000, 12,000 and 6,500 respectively. See Clark and Slack, English Towns in Transition 1500-1700 (Oxford, 1976), p.83.



The first development to be inspected is the close of the propagandist campaign. Religious propaganda had caused the prosperity of the acting business in the 1530s. It continued to expand the trade until the early 1550s, when anti-Catholic polemics encountered suppression from Mary's government. The religious campaign revived soon after Elizabeth came to the throne, and new subjects, such as the royal marriage and succession, were introduced. The 'old' and 'new' campaign issues had made the service of livery players once again highly demanded; the acting business, as a result, achieved unprecedented success in the early years of Elizabeth's reign.<sup>65</sup>

The subject matters of persuasion, however, gradually lost their ground as the regime proceeded. Firstly, by the 1570s, the religious controversy, which had for long puzzled the English subjects, was gradually settled, though only temporarily, by Elizabeth's government. The queen's attitude was the determining point. Unlike her predecessors, the new English queen chose a middle path in her religious policy. Six weeks after Mary's death, a royal proclamation was issued to stop preaching of all kinds. This decree was meant to prevent further outbreaks of religious violence, for already there had been some anti-Catholic assaults happening in London.<sup>66</sup>

The 1559 Parliament further confirmed Elizabeth's moderate religious policy. In a series of statutes beginning with the Acts of Supremacy and Uniformity, the Parliament defined the religion of England and its relationship to the state. The Act

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<sup>65</sup> For more about the propagandist campaign, see chapters 4 and 5.

<sup>66</sup> Hughes and Larkin (eds.), *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, vol.2, p.102. Cf. Norman Johns, *The Birth of the Elizabethan Age: England in the 1560s* (Oxford, 1993), pp.12-3. There had been some disturbing incidents since Mary's death. See Jones, *ibid.*, p.13.



of Supremacy declared Elizabeth as the 'Supreme Governor of the realm in spiritual and temporal affairs and repealed most of Mary's implementations, which abolished Protestantism and restored the official status of the Catholic Church.<sup>67</sup> At the first glance, Elizabeth's Parliament was anti-Catholic; it revoked Mary's Catholic settlements, turning England back to her previous track. But, to the consolation of the Papists and the disappointment of the activists, the Church settlement did not drive the realm further to the Protestant end. In the first decade of Elizabeth's reign, different parties still tried to sway the religion to their own practice, but they soon realised that this middle path was Elizabeth's decision and gradually gave up.<sup>68</sup>

The queen's marriage and her succession arrangement were other subject matters for advertising. The campaign reached its peak in 1566, when Elizabeth still refused to give her subjects a confirmed answer of her arrangement; the two Houses finally presented a petition to Elizabeth asking her to 'deal with the matter of the succession.' The action irritated the queen, who summoned thirty members of each House to her presence, showing her anger. She delivered a fairly severe speech:

'how far from dutiful care, yea rather how ny a traiterous trik, this tumblin cast did springe, I muse how men of wit can so hardly use that gift the hold. I marvel not muche that brideles colts do not knowe ther ridar's hand, whome bit of kingely reine did never snaffe yet. Whither it was fit that so great a cause as this shuld have had his beginning in such a publik place as that, let it be well waighed. Must all ivel bodings that might be recited be founde litel enough to hap to my share? Was it wel ment, think you, that those that knewe not how fit this matter was to be graunted by the Prince wold preiudicat ther Prince in agravating the matter, so all ther arguments tended to my careles care of this my dere realm?'<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> Johns, *ibid.*, p.20.

<sup>68</sup> The propagandist campaigns of the duchess of Suffolk and the earl of Bedford are two examples. See chapters 4 and 5.

<sup>69</sup> The text is from PRO SP Dom.Eliz.41/5, fragment of Elizabeth's own draft. It is transcribed in T.E. Hartley, (ed.), Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I, vol.1.1558-1581 (Leicester, 1981),

In the speech, Elizabeth clearly demonstrated that she believed interference to be dangerous to the kingdom and the monarchy. She concluded the speech by clearly demonstrating her determination to leave the decision to herself.

‘For yt ys monstuous that the ffeete sholde dyrecte the hed. And therefore this ys my mynde and aunswere, which I wold have to be shewede in the twoo howses.’<sup>70</sup>

The moral of Elizabeth’s speech, as Norman Jones points out, was clear: English subjects were not to talk about the succession any more.<sup>71</sup>

Elizabeth’s words did not bring the matter to an end. For instance, William Lambarde introduced a bill for nominating an heir soon after the Commons heard the queen’s order.<sup>72</sup> However, the queen’s speech clearly demonstrated that she was not to be persuaded. Her declaration was not satisfactory to the English subjects, but they gradually learned that there was little room left for them to talk about.

Religion and succession were the two subject matters for advertising since Elizabeth’s accession. By the mid-1570s for the latest, it became clear to English people that these two affairs were not the ones they could have a word with. The polemic service of livery companies was less and less required accordingly, and finally disappeared entirely in the 1580s. The termination of the propagandist

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p.145.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.148-9. For the complete speech, see *ibid.*, pp.145-9. See also Jones, *The Birth of the Elizabethan Age*, pp.146-8. Also Mortimer Levine, *The Early Elizabethan Succession Question, 1558-1568* (California, 1966), ch.10 for the background of the 1566 Parliament.

<sup>71</sup> Jones, *ibid.*, p.148.

<sup>72</sup> For the speech, see Hartley, *Proceedings in the Parliaments of Elizabeth I*, pp.129-39. Cf. Chapter 5 of this thesis.

campaign certainly was a big stroke to the acting profession; the factor that had animated the business in the first place no longer existed. The blow, however, was not fatal and players survived the 1580s crisis. They continued to tour the country after 1580; their trade experienced gradual decline in the last two decades of the century, but they did not disappear from the stage entirely. The fact that livery players continued to tour the country after the 1580s shows that there were other elements supporting the trade, and the disappearance of that remaining factors was the last straw of the business. That was the dissolution of noble patronage.

The final pillar that supported the dwindling trade of livery acting companies was that of noble patronage. Apart from the patronage of the crown, which only a very few troupes could have enjoyed, sponsorship from noblemen was the most important resource supporting the trade. Noble patrons recruited players into their households, providing the protection and financial support they needed.<sup>73</sup> This indispensable support for livery companies gradually faded away under the Tudors. One manifest phenomenon was the decline of noble patronage of literature.

One example well illustrating the degeneration of noble literary patronage was the experience of Richard Robinson. Like most men of letters, Robinson's literary vocation needed the sponsorship of patrons. In the 1570s and 1580s, he was quite handsomely rewarded. Edward Manners, earl of Rutland, for example, in 1580, had given him six angels (i.e. £3) for his translation of a work by Melanchthon. Sir Philip

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<sup>73</sup> For more about the role of household players and about noble patronage, see chapters 1 and 2.

Sidney (son of Sir Henry) had also been generous to him.<sup>74</sup> But his fortunes were to change during the 1590s.

In 1590, Robinson dedicated his first instalment of his translation of the Psalms, *A Proceeding in the Harmony of King David's Harp*, to Sir Christopher Hatton, the Lord Chancellor, and received six angels (i.e. £3) for it; the reward was then a very handsome one. Two years later, he dedicated the second instalment to Sir John Puckering, Keeper of the Great Seal. This time, he received two angels (20 shillings) from Puckering and 6s 8d from his lady. However, when he dedicated the third instalment to Elizabeth in 1595, he encountered an explicit rejection; he recorded:

'I pore man expected Comfort for the same deservingly...I making my humble suite vnto youre moste gracyus Highnes for some releef in money,...M. Doctor Caesar then Master of the Requestes returned mee answer, your Highness was glad yow had a Subiect coulde do so well, and that I deserued commendacions. But for any gratification for any suche laboures youre Maiesty was not in mynde as then to bestow any suche relief vppon mee: for youre Highness (as hee sayde) had care of the chargeable Voyage [i.e. the naval expedition against the Spanish in Cadiz, led by Essex and Raleigh in 1595], of releving youre Needy soldyers and requyting of theyre paynes, fynally youre Highness sett me not on worck, and therefore yow were not to payme any wages. Herewith I departed from youre Highness Court at Richmond, patiently as a pore man before, but not (by this meanes) become a Porer.'<sup>75</sup>

In 1596, Robinson tried his luck with Sir Thomas Egerton, the newly appointed Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, to whom he dedicated his *Fourth Instalment*. He met with an utter rejection; and recalled,

'...when I presented my sayde Booke in ye presence of the 6 Clerckes in the Chancery; His Lordship grutching to receyve my Booke, or to rende mee any

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<sup>74</sup> Alistair Fox, 'The Complaint of Poetry for the Death of Liberality: the Decline of Literary Patronage in the 1590s.' in John Guy (ed.), *The Reign of Elizabeth I: Court and Culture in the Last Decade* (Cambridge, 1995), pp.234-5.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p.234.

rewarde, his eloquent tonge tripped mee in my suite saying, Whate have we here?  
...He turned mee away bycause of my poverty.'<sup>76</sup>

As Alistair Fox comments, throughout the 1590s, Robinson found himself the victim of diminishing returns.<sup>77</sup> Robinson's case was certainly not an isolated one; many other literary men found it more and more difficult to find out the sponsorship they needed and used to enjoy. Edmund Spenser, regarded by many as the greatest poet of the decade, for example, was one of them. The whole literary career of Spenser was, described by Fox, 'a concerted effort to gain, not simply monetary reward, but preferment at Court'. Spenser's first bid of patronage was his dedication of his *The Shepheardes Calenda* (1579) to Sir Philip Sidney.<sup>78</sup> This first attempt did not gain Spenser the advancement at Court as he desired; on the contrary, he was sent to Ireland as Lord Grey's secretary in 1580.

After ten years, Spenser made a second attempt. This time, on the advice of Sir Walter Raleigh, Spenser returned to England and published the first three books of *The Faerie Queene*. This epic poem was 'a client's flattery of the queen to excel all flatteries.'<sup>79</sup> This spectacular effort, however, did not gain Spenser preferment, at least not in the first instance; he lingered around the court for almost a year and finally in February 1591, he was granted a pension of £50 for life. The reward, of course, was far less than the poet had hoped for. Spenser made one last effort to gain

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<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> Sidney probably introduced Spenser to his uncle Robert Dudley, the earl of Leicester, and therefore to Court. See *ibid.*, p.235.

<sup>79</sup> Fox comments that Spenser was so determined the gain the patronage that his list of dedicatory sonnets reads like a *Who's Who* of late-Elizabethan patrons. *Ibid.*, p.236.

advancement at court in the winter of 1595-6, when he dedicated the second instalment (Books IV-VI) of *The Faerie Queene*, to Elizabeth. This time, he was made sheriff of Cork in 1598, but the court preferment he desired never came. Spenser's search for court patronage ended, as he later described in his *Prothalamion* (1596), in failure.

'my long fruitlesse stay  
In Princes Court, and expectation vayne  
Of idle hopes, which still doe fly away,  
Like empy shadowes...' <sup>80</sup>

Compared to other writers of the time, Spenser was certainly fortunate. Some critics attribute Spenser's lack of advancement to the offence he had caused Burghley.<sup>81</sup> Spenser's experience, however, was not atypical. As Robinson's case shows, many men of letters encountered the same disappointment when seeking for patronage.

Robinson's story suggests that the mid-1590s was the watershed. Fox gives us several reasons for this change of attitudes. The altered nature of the patrons was one reason. He argues that a new breed of administrators had replaced the former courtly patrons; Egerton, for instance, did not rate literary talent highly as a recommendation for advancement or monetary reward.<sup>82</sup> The explosion in the number of literary works and printed works also contributed to the phenomenon. As Thomas Evans remarks in his dedication to his poem *Oedipus* (1615), 'the multitude of writers in

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<sup>80</sup> For a complete description of Spenser's patronage seeking attempts, see *ibid.*, pp.235-8.

<sup>81</sup> In his *Mother Hubbard's Tale* (1579, published 1591), Burghley is depicted satirically. See *ibid.*, pp.237, 238.

<sup>82</sup> Fox, 'The Complaint of Poetry for the Death of Liberality', p.235.

our age hath begotten a scarcitie of patrons.’<sup>83</sup> Too many suitors for noble patrons had made it difficult to satisfy them all.<sup>84</sup>

Apart from the two explanations given, however, the increasing financial difficulty of the nation could have been the central cause for this decline of literary patronage. Robinson’s dedication mentioned earlier shows that the queen did appreciate the labours of her subject, but the ‘chargeable voyage’ and the ‘needy soldyers’ had preoccupied both her majesty’s mind and purse that it was unlikely for her to reward the literary service provided as she used to do. In fact, this financial embarrassment was not encountered by the monarch only, her nobility certainly underwent the same experience if not earlier than their mistress. Fox remarks, in the 1590s, ‘patrons simply ceased to be as munificent as they once had been,’ and this was ‘largely because the nation’s finances were depleted.’<sup>85</sup>

Fox’s argument is verified by Lawrence Stone’s The Crisis of the Aristocracy. Examining various incomes of the aristocrats, Stone came to the conclusion that the holdings of the surviving peers of 1558 fell by about a quarter by 1602 and by a further fifth by 1641. Take his inspection of rental income from lands, the major and most reliable income in feudal economy, as an example. Stone divides the peerage of 1559 and 1602, the first and last integral years of Elizabeth’s reign, into eight groups,

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<sup>83</sup> F.P. Wilson, ‘Some Notes on Authors and Patrons in Tudor and Stuart Times’, in James G. McManaway *et al.* (eds) Joseph Quincy Adams. Memorial studies (Washington, DD, 1948), p.553. Cf. Fox, ‘The Complaint of Poetry for the Death of Liberality’, p.235.

<sup>84</sup> Fox, ibid., p.235.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid., p.234.



according to their gross rental income.<sup>86</sup> In 1559, there were eight families belonging to the top four groups:<sup>87</sup> the Howards (Norfolk) (1),<sup>88</sup> Talbots (2), Herberts, Percies, Stanleys (3), and Berkeleys, Fitzalans, Veres (4). This composition underwent a drastic change under Elizabeth. The number of noble families belonging to the top four groups fell from eight in 1559 to four in 1602: they were the Talbots (3), and Cecils, Percies, Sackvilles (4).<sup>89</sup> And what is more astonishing is that no family in 1602 can be assigned to the top two groups, and the Talbots can only be classified to group 3 if their industrial profits are included.<sup>90</sup> The figures clearly show that wealthy families, mostly feudal magnates, suffered gravely in the last phase of the sixteenth century.

Deterioration in family incomes did not happen to greater peers only; it also extended to lesser ones. Returning to Stone's list, we find that group five also suffered a recession; its peerage number fell from 15 to 10. No drastic fluctuations happened in groups 6 and 8;<sup>91</sup> the only exception appears in group 7, whose family

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<sup>86</sup> Stone in fact chooses three dates, 1559, 1602, and 1641, for comparison. But as the last one is beyond the period of our concern, it will not be included in current discussion. Stone has a quite detailed explanation of his methodology. See his *The Crisis of the Aristocracy 1558-1641* (Oxford, 1965), pp.129-138. The following data are from Stone, *ibid.*, appendix VIII, 'Estimates of Gross Rental, 1559, 1602, 1641'.

<sup>87</sup> In 1559, the estimated rental incomes of the eight groups are (1) £6,000, (2) £5,000-5,999, (3) £4,000-4,999, (4) £3,000-3,999, (5) £2,000-2,000, (6) £1,000-1,999 (7) £500-999, (8) £0-499.

<sup>88</sup> The number inside the parenthesis indicates the income group to which the family belonged.

<sup>89</sup> Stone has modified the estimated gross rental income of each group according to the Phelps Brown price index. The modified criteria are (1) £10,800+, (2) £9,000-10,799, (3) £7,200-8,999, (4) £5,400-7,199, (5) £3,600-5,399, (6) £1,800-3,599, (7) £900-1,799, (8) £0-899. If the industrial profits are not included, the Talbots can only be assigned to the fourth group. Cf. Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy*, p.139.

<sup>90</sup> See *ibid.*, appendix VIII.

<sup>91</sup> Peerage number in group 6 remains the same (15), while there is a slight drop in group 8 from 6 in



number rises from 19 in 1559 to 24 in 1602.<sup>92</sup> On the whole, Stone's survey shows that Elizabethan peerage in common suffered an economic recession, as the number of wealthy families dwindled significantly.

What accompanied the deterioration of the noble finances was their political power; Tudor nobility, especially those of ancient origins, experienced a significant decay of their influence. Stone remarks in his book that, surveying the top four groups in 1559, it is surprising to find that 'only the Herberts were of recent origin; all the others had acquired their wealth and lands before the accession of Henry VIII'.<sup>93</sup> Indeed, as Stone's list shows, by the early years of Elizabeth's reign, feudal magnates, such as the Howards, Percies, and Stanleys, still enjoyed an incomparable economic superiority. This, however, was less and less the case. The downfall of the northern earls in 1569 and the execution of the duke of Norfolk in 1572 had virtually terminated the era of feudal magnates; by the end of Elizabeth's reign, ancient families, if not disappeared all together, had utterly lost the political autonomy they used to enjoyed.

The power vacancies left by the ancient peers were filled by new men introduced by the monarch, a policy employed by the Tudors, especially by Henry VIII, to consolidate their control over the aristocrats. Under Henry VII, the number of

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1559 to 5 in 1602.

<sup>92</sup> Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy*, appendix VIII. The increase of the peerage number in group 7 however is misleading, because mobility within the aristocrats is not put into consideration. In fact, at least 8 out of the 24 families of 1602 were from upper groups. Namely, there is no real increase in the group either. For more detailed discussion of the economic change of the aristocrats, see *ibid.*, chapter 4.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, p.138.

male peers dwindled from the 57 of the previous regime to 44. This condition was reversed after Henry VIII succeeded to the throne; by 1529, the number of the peerage had returned to the standard of the pre-Tudor period. On the surface, the nobility enjoyed certain stability under Henry, as this figure remained virtually unchanged until the end of the regime. This however was not the truth; there was a substantial turnover concealed behind the fact: the consistent peerage number was a result of a delicate balance kept by the king between new creations and attainders or natural extinctions. Between 1509 and 1553, Henry VIII had created, restored, or resumed some forty-seven titles, and a great majority of these titles were granted to successful soldiers and administrators after 1529.<sup>94</sup>

The political centralisation applied by the Tudor monarchs was certainly successful. As Stone remarks, 'no one could fail to notice the fate of those whose wealth, influence, or possible claims to the throne the Tudors found dangerous. The de La Poles, the Courtenays, the Nevills, the Staffords, the Percys, the Howards, had all been reduced in part or in whole.'<sup>95</sup> This transformation within the peers was reflected in noble patronage of players. Whereas on our patron list of the 1550s, there are still some members of ancient families, such as Henry Neville (Abergavenny) and Thomas Howard (Norfolk), none of these families remain on the list of the 1590s. In other words, by the 1590s, old families had withdrawn, almost entirely, from traditional patronage<sup>96</sup> and peers of recent creation dominated the sponsorship system.

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<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, p.97.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p.399.

<sup>96</sup> The only exception was the Clifford family. Players of George Clifford, third earl of Cumberland, was rewarded at Exeter in 1594-5. But, strictly speaking, they can not be considered as 'ancient'

The progression of centralisation under the Tudors, at the first glance, meant the decay of regional magnates and the establishment of the court and the capital as the political centre of the realm; the evolution however had its cultural dimension. Centralisation, from cultural perspective, also meant the crown's increasing manipulation of opinion. The development of English theatre in the sixteenth century was not exceptional in this context. Drama, along with other literary forms, was a powerful means in shaping public opinions. If not under royal control, it could have undermined the stability of the regime. Elizabethan England faced the increasing threat of foreign invasion; it became more and more crucial for the Queen to secure her control over the country. The 1574 patent, which protected the players from the prosecution of the city authorities of London, shows the crown's determination to establish itself the protector, and therefore the eventual patron, of acting companies. The formation of the Queen's Men in 1583 was a further step taken to manage London stage more directly. In fact, public opinion, though still had its way in the matters of the state, by the middle of Elizabeth's reign, it was the queen, and the queen only, who decided the policy of the state. The fruitless persuasive attempt of the Cambridge scholars was a good example; the incident shows that Elizabeth was determined to leave those important issues, such as her religious policy and the question of succession, to herself.<sup>97</sup>

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family, as they were created to the earldom by Henry VIII in 1525. See John M. Wasson (ed.) Devon (Toronto, 1986), p.174. C[okayne], G[eorge] E[dward], The Complete Peerage of England, Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain and the United Kingdom, extant, extinct or dormant, 2nd edition (ed.) Vicary Gibbs, 13 vols. (London, 1910- ), vol.3, p.566.

<sup>97</sup> For the Cambridge incident, see chapter 5. See also Bevington, Tudor Drama and Politics, p.128.

This centralisation, or monopoly, of opinion had immediate influence on the acting business. One major function of travelling players was for propaganda: to promote their master's opinion on religious issues in the first place, then on matters of the state. The centralising developments made Elizabeth the key figure to persuade, whereas, unfortunately, the English queen clearly demonstrated that she was not persuadable. One principal service provided by the players turned out to be dispensable.

The decline of the demand for players' polemical service was evident by the 1580s; the degeneration, however, did not terminate instantly the noblemen's enthusiasm of keeping their own playing troupes; the business of household players did not face its final blow before the turn of the century. Taking the 13 rising families of 1602 discussed above as an example, at least ten of them had kept their own troupe for a certain period of time.<sup>98</sup> Apparently, new peers were in general interested in sponsoring a family company, which served as an emblem of a great household.

The fatal blow to the livery companies was not the termination of propagandist campaign, but the decay of great households. Centralisation consolidated the political and economic power used to be enjoyed by the feudal lords to the hands of the monarch. Constant absence from the home county and degeneration in finance made it both unnecessary and unaffordable for the nobles to maintain a spectacular household at their family seats. They had been transformed by the Tudor monarchs

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<sup>98</sup> The ten families are the Brookes, Dudleys, Greys (Kent), Hastings, Howards (Effingham), Berties, Cecils, Comptons, Howards (Walden), and Norris.

into royal courtiers; their interests and focus of life were in the capital and at the royal court. There was no need for the King's servants to keep a large household; the dissolution of the great household therefore announced the end of livery players' era.

When Philip Henslowe tried to secure an appointment of a new royal bear-master in 1598, he understood perfectly that he could expect little help from his patron, Charles Howard, Lord Admiral. He wrote to Edward Alleyn, his son-in-law and business partner, complaining that 'I haue bene w<sup>th</sup> my lord admeralles a bowte yt', but 'I ame sure my lorde admerall will do nothing.'<sup>99</sup> Compared to Robert Dudley, who never failed to offer the help asked for by his players, Howard certainly kept a much more distant relationship with his company. From Dudley to Howard, there was clearly an alteration of master and player interaction. Gradually, players ceased to take other household duties when not performing; they did not accompany their master when the latter travelled;<sup>100</sup> and they did not stay in the same company for their lifetime.<sup>101</sup>

Livery players survived the crisis of the 1580s; they were able to sustain their livelihood until the end of the sixteenth century. In the meantime, they experienced a

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<sup>99</sup> Alleyn bought the Beargarden in 1594, which was operated under licence from the Master of the Royal Game. When Ralph Bowes, Master from 1573, was dying in or about 1598, Henslowe and Alleyn made great efforts to secure his office. It turned out that Henslowe failed to procure the office. They therefore paid the next Master, John Dorington, a quarterly fee of £10 for licence to run the Beargarden. They finally purchased the joint Mastership from Sir William Steward in 1604. See R.A. Foakes and R.T. Rickert (eds.), Henslowe's Diary: Edited with Supplementary Material, Introduction and Notes (Cambridge, 1961), p.299. Cf. Gurr, Shakespearian Playing Companies, p.32.

<sup>100</sup> For instance, when Leicester went to the Netherlands in 1586, only part of his players went with him. The remains of the company continued their customary touring project.

<sup>101</sup> See chapter 1.

transformation of the trade. Some players successfully converted themselves from household servants to public entertainers in this final phase. These figures, congregating in the capital, generated a golden age of English theatre. Whereas their less competent or less fortunate friends, continued wandering amongst decaying households, and finally vanished into history with them.

## Conclusion

With the data accumulated from the Malone and REED collections, the thesis is, for the first time, able to demonstrate the fluctuations of the livery playing business in the sixteenth century. The statistical analysis shows that the trade of these patronised performers rose in the 1530s, experienced a slight setback in the mid-1550s, and achieved unprecedented success in the 1560s. This expansion of the activities of the acting profession in the 1530s has never been clearly identified or satisfactorily explained. This study, however, shows that Thomas Cromwell, with the help of pamphleteers, such as Richard Morison, and dramatists, such as John Bale, systematically carried out a large-scale religious propagandist campaign. To promote the king's new religious policy, Cromwell patronised a livery propagandist troupe headed by Bale to disseminate the Reformation message.

The minister's policy was soon duplicated by other Protestant figures. Katherine, duchess of Suffolk, began to use the family troupe to advance her religious cause, after the duke died in 1545. The campaign was interrupted by Mary, under whose reign, the duchess, along with many other Protestant sympathisers, was forced to flee to the continent. Katherine harboured great expectations when returning from the exile after Elizabeth's accession. She instructed her troupe, leaving its home county, to venture west. Elizabeth's courtiers also adopted similar practice. Francis Russell, the earl of Bedford, asked his company, leaving its home base in the south-west, to take a northern tour. Katherine's and Russell's cases show

that livery troupes were asked to give up the more profitable home region, travelling to unfamiliar lands to promote their patron's religious convictions. Suffolk's and Bedford's campaign both terminated in the mid-1560s. Although similar policies continued to operate into the 1570s, the disappearance of the two propagandist companies shows that Protestant patrons gradually realised that the queen was not persuadable.

Other national issues were also brought into the propagandist campaign under Elizabeth's reign; the queen's marriage and her succession arrangement were the concerns of the campaigners. Robert Dudley, the earl of Leicester and the most promising English candidate for Elizabeth's hand, was the leading figure in the matrimonial propaganda. 'Sweet Robin' employed all his resources of patronage to advance his cause. The efforts of persuasion gradually proved to be fruitless and diminished almost entirely after the mid-1560s. Large-scale propaganda was a new operation invented by the Tudors. Thomas Wolsey was the first figure using the tool to promote his own cause; whereas it was Cromwell who first employed it systematically. The pro-Protestant campaign encountered suppression from Mary's government, but the new practice did not vanish. It soon returned to the stage after Elizabeth ascended the Tudor throne; but finally went into history by 1580 when the queen made her subjects realise that she was not to be persuaded.

This thesis also shows that patronage of players had its political motive. Keeping a household acting troupe to provide entertainment when needed was one



major incentive behind the sponsorship. Recreation, however, was not the only reason for a great man to maintain his own livery company. Patronage of players, like other operations of the sort, was also meant to strengthen the patron's link with his subjects. The affinity between a livery company's touring pattern and the patron's sphere of influence suggests that the patronage of a household troupe was meant to consolidate the patron's regional influence. This is the case of the sponsorship of both the Stanleys' and Lord Warden of Cinque Ports' players.

This thesis also demonstrates that the touring of livery acting companies very much reflected the status of their patron. On the whole, companies with greater patrons, whose reputation and influence were nationwide, usually travelled more frequently and extensively; they would venture to areas with less family connection. By contrast, troupes patronised by towns or regional figures tended to confine their activity to a peculiar region; they preferred to remain in their home area and almost never ventured to distant counties. Nevertheless, this study also suggests that the link between patron and company was strong. Both greater and regional companies were best rewarded in the district under their patron's influence. Besides, the touring range of these livery players also responded to the influential sphere of the master. The company under the patronage of the earl of Leicester toured to almost every corner of the realm; whereas the troupe kept by the Lord Warden never left the south-east. Apart from the 1560s, regional troupes named by their patron never played a significant role in the acting profession. By contrast, the business of regional troupes named by location was fairly prosperous in the early years of the Tudor period. These

local companies declined seriously in the second half of the sixteenth century. Financial difficulty and degenerating local identity were likely to be the causes. The deterioration of the regional acting business was not an isolated phenomenon; it was part of the development of centralisation encouraged by the Tudor monarchs.

The termination of the propagandist war, the emergence of the commercial London stage, and the increase of anti-theatrical prejudice in around the 1580s had all contributed to the crisis of the trade by the end of the century. They did not cause the end of the business, however, and livery players continued to tour the provinces during the period. This study reveals that it was not until the dissolution of great households, the backbone of the patronage mechanism, that the business of itinerant livery companies really came to an end. The experience of livery players in the sixteenth century shows us not only the fluctuations of one particular trade, but also the transformation of the whole of English society. The livery acting business was adhering to the traditional patronage system. Individual incidents, such as the Reformation, had elevated the trade to unexpected success; the pacification of these incidents also made players' propagandist service no longer needed. The settlement of individual issues, however, did not terminate the trade; it was the decline of great households which did. During the last two decades of the sixteenth century, players successfully transformed themselves from household servants to independent performers.

The patronage of livery players and the propagandist service they provided have for long been the concerns of both literary critics and historians. The former were interested in artistic achievement and the physical conditions of theatrical productions, whereas the latter were concerned with players' role in the propagandist campaign of the Reformation. Few studies have ever tried to combine the achievements of the two disciplines into one study. This thesis is an attempt to put the livery acting business back into its historical context, showing that the fluctuations of the profession in the sixteenth century were a product of its particular time. Besides, theatre historians usually consider the theatrical performance of pre-Shakespearean period as the prelude of the coming 'golden age'. This study shows that acting companies in the sixteenth century were patronised for their own sake. Their business was affected but not replaced by the emerging London stage, and their decline was due to the dissolution of feudal patronage. Many assumptions about pre-London theatrical activity have been made by scholars. There has been little agreement, however, since the scattering of records has made arguments difficult to substantiate. This thesis is also the first work that is able to provide statistical evidence to verify those long-debated issues.

## APPENDICES

1. Entry Numbers of All Types of Livery Companies in the Sixteenth Century
2. Average Payments to Livery Players in the Sixteenth Century
3. Tudor Polemical Plays
4. Greater Noble Companies
5. Regional Companies
6. The Touring of Major Acting Companies

Appendix 1: Entry Numbers of All Types of Livery Companies in the Sixteenth Century

Players	1500-10	1510-20	1520-30	1530-40	1540-50	1550-60	1560-70	1570-80	1580-90	1590-1600	Total	%
Royal	9	5	34	99	83	43	115	31	142	191	752	24.8
Noble	7	39	30	89	106	93	333	388	472	393	1950	64.3
Local	46	50	83	50	19	15	27	21	7	15	333	11.0
Total	62	94	147	238	208	151	475	440	621	599	3035	---

Minstrels	1500-10	1510-20	1520-30	1530-40	1540-50	1550-60	1560-70	1570-80	1580-90	1590-1600	Total	%
Royal	91	68	89	69	30	24	0	0	0	0	371	36.8
Noble	60	106	137	120	81	63	14	3	1	0	585	58.0
Local	6	11	6	5	10	4	0	3	7	1	53	5.3
Total	157	185	232	194	121	91	14	6	8	1	1009	---

Bearwards/ Animal-wards	1500-10	1510-20	1520-30	1530-40	1540-50	1550-60	1560-70	1570-80	1580-90	1590-1600	Total	%
Royal	23	59	38	12	44	6	39	39	25	10	295	46.2
Noble	22	41	50	33	15	8	39	67	38	21	334	52.3
Local	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	4	2	0	10	1.6
Total	45	100	88	48	60	14	78	110	65	31	639	---

Jesters/ Jugglers	1500-10	1510-20	1520-30	1530-40	1540-50	1550-60	1560-70	1570-80	1580-90	1590-1600	Total	%
Royal	0	13	35	15	21	17	16	5	5	1	128	90.1
Noble	1	1	0	4	0	0	2	2	2	0	12	8.5
Local	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	1.4
Total	1	14	35	19	21	17	18	8	8	1	142	---

Musicians/ Trumpeters	1500-10	1510-20	1520-30	1530-40	1540-50	1550-60	1560-70	1570-80	1580-90	1590-1600	Total	%
Royal	3	10	8	10	14	11	4	13	4	15	92	19.1
Noble	0	9	4	7	6	5	6	92	129	68	326	67.8
Local	1	1	2	3	2	1	3	7	15	28	63	13.1
Total	4	20	14	20	22	17	13	112	148	111	481	---

Entertainers/ Performers	1500-10	1510-20	1520-30	1530-40	1540-50	1550-60	1560-70	1570-80	1580-90	1590-1600	Total	%
Royal	45	22	18	16	8	1	1	0	2	5	118	46.8
Noble	15	27	39	17	8	1	1	1	8	2	119	47.2
Local	2	3	1	2	2	1	2	1	0	1	15	6.0
Total	62	52	58	35	18	3	4	2	10	8	252	---

Waits	1500-10	1510-20	1520-30	1530-40	1540-50	1550-60	1560-70	1570-80	1580-90	1590-1600	Total	%
Royal	0	7	6	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	5.7
Noble	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	3	4	1	12	3.4
Local	10	3	8	32	10	10	18	78	98	50	317	90.8
Total	10	10	15	40	11	11	18	81	102	51	349	---

Others	1500-10	1510-20	1520-30	1530-40	1540-50	1550-60	1560-70	1570-80	1580-90	1590-1600	Total	%
Royal	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	7	17.1
Noble	0	2	0	2	0	1	2	0	1	0	8	19.5
Local	1	1	6	3	0	4	2	5	1	3	26	63.4
Total	2	3	7	5	0	5	4	5	3	7	41	---

	1500-10	1510-20	1520-30	1530-40	1540-50	1550-60	1560-70	1570-80	1580-90	1590-1600	Total
Total	343	478	596	599	461	309	624	764	965	809	5948

Appendix 2: Average Payments to Livery Players in the Sixteenth Century

	1500-10	1510-20	1520-30	1530-40	1540-50	1550-60	1560-70	1570-80	1580-90	1590-1600
Royal	9s (108d)	6s 2d (74d)	8s 2d (98d)	6s 10d (82d)	7s 5d (89d)	10s 9d (129d)	13s 3d (159d)	12s 10d (154d)	22s 11d (275d)	20s 11d (251d)
Noble	3s (36d)	3s 8d (44d)	3s 3d (39d)	7s 3d (87d)	6s 6d (78d)	7s 4d (88d)	8s 6d (102d)	10s 8d (128d)	11s 11d (143d)	13s 10d (166d)
Local	3s 5d (41d)	3s 1d (37d)	3s 5d (41d)	4s 7d (55d)	3s (36d)	8s 5d (101d)	4s 5d (53d)	6s 2d (74d)	2s 7d (31d)	3s 11d (47d)
Total	4s 2d (50d)	3s 6d (42d)	4s 5d (53d)	6s 6d (78d)	6s 7d (79d)	8s 6d (102d)	9s 4d (112d)	10s 6d (126d)	14s 4d (172d)	15s 11d (191d)
Amount Expect	4s 2d (50d)	4s 7d (55d)	6s 3d (75d)	6s 4d (76d)	8s 6d (102d)	12s 5d (149d)	11s 9d (141d)	13s 5d (161d)	15s 4d (184d)	20s 10d (250d)
Inflation Rate <sup>1</sup>	100	109.4	150	151.9	204.7	297.2	281.1	321.7	367	500

<sup>1</sup> Based on the price of a composite unite of foodstuffs. See R.B. Outhwaite, *Inflation in Tudor and Early Stuart England*, 2nd ed. (Hong Kong: MacMillan, 1982).

### Appendix 3: Tudor Polemical Plays<sup>1</sup>

Based on S. Schoenbaum (ed.), *Annals of the English Drama, 975-1700*, 3rd edition, revised by Sylvia Stoler Wagonheim (London, 1989).

Year	Author	Title	Type	Known Auspices	Memo
1522	Cornish, William <sup>2</sup>	'Friendship, Prudence, and Might' ('The Triumph of Amity')	Political Moral	Boys at Court	
1526	Roo (or Rho), John <sup>3</sup>	'Lord Governance and Lady Public Weal'*	Political Moral	Gray's Inn	
1527	Ritwise, John (?) <sup>4</sup>	'Heretic Luther' ('The Deliverance of the Pope') (in Latin and in France)*	Anti-Protestant Interlude	Paul's at Court	
1528	Anon.	'Religion, Peace, and Justice'	Latin Political Interlude	At Wolsey's (by Paul's?)	
1533	Anon.	'Against the Cardinals'*	Anti-Catholic Interlude	Court	
1534	Anon.	'...Interpretation of a chapter of the Apocalypse...[showing Henry VIII] cutting off heads of the clergy'*	Anti-Catholic Interlude	Outside London	
1536	Bale, John <sup>5</sup>	'The Life of John the Baptist' in 14 books ('Vitam D. Ioannis Baptistae')* 'Christ and the Doctors' ('De Christo Duodenni')* 'I & II The Baptism and Temptation' ('De Baptismo et Tentatione')* 'The Raising of Lazarus' ('De Lazaro Resuscitato')* 'The Council of Bishops' (De Consilio Pontificum)* 'Simon the Leper' ('De Simone Leproso')*	Adopted anti-Catholic Mystery Cycle (?)	Thorndon, Suffolk (?) St. Stephen's, Canterbury (?) (1538-40)	These plays were written, said Bale, for the earl of Oxford

<sup>1</sup> Plays performed outside England are included.

<sup>2</sup> Cornish (fl. 1509-23) was a dramatist, choirmaster, and Master of Children of Chapel.

<sup>3</sup> Roo (Rho) (fl. 1506-26) was Gray's Inn's sergeant at law.

<sup>4</sup> Ritwise (1490-c.1532) was a schoolmaster.



Year	Author	Title	Type	Known Auspices	Memo
		'The Lord's Supper and Washing the Feet' ( 'De Coena Domini et Pedum Lotione' ) * 'I & II The Burial and Resurrection' ( 'De Sepultura et Resurrectione' ) *			
	Bale, John	'On the Seven Sins' ( 'De Septem Peccatis' ) *	Anti-Catholic Moral (?)	Same as above (?)	
	Bale, John	'Pater Noster Play (?) ( 'Super Oratione Dominica' ) *	Anti-Catholic Moral (?)	Same as above (?)	
	Anon.	'St Thomas the Apostle' ( subject ) *	Anti-Catholic Interlude	York ( acted )	
1537	Bale, John	'Against Adulterators of the Word of God' ( 'Contra Adulterantes Dei Verbum' ) *	Anti-Catholic Interlude	---	
	Bale, John	'I & II Against Momi and Zoili' ( 'Erga Memos et Zoilos. Against Scoffers and Backbiters' ) *	Anti-Catholic Interlude	---	
	Bale, John	'I & II On Sects among the Papists' ( 'De Sectis Papisticis' ) *	Anti-Catholic Interlude	---	
	Bale, John	'I & II Treacheries of the Papists' ( 'Proditiones Papistarum' ) *	Anti-Catholic Interlude	---	
	Bale, John	'I & II Upon Both Marriages of the King' ( 'Super Utrouque Regis Coniugio' ) *	Anti-Catholic Interlude	Thorndon, Suffolk (?) St. Stephen's, Canterbury (?) ( 1538-9 )	The play was written, said Bale, for the earl of Oxford
	Wylley, Thomas <sup>6</sup>	'Against the Pope's Councillors' *	Anti-Catholic Moral	Yoxford (?)	
	Anon.	'Of a King How He Should Rule His Realm' *	Political-Moral Interlude	Suffolk ( acted )	
1538	Bale, John	'God's Promises' ( 'The Chief Promises of God unto Man' : 'De Magnis Dei Promissionibus' )	Anti-Catholic Mystery	St. Stephen's, Canterbury	

<sup>5</sup> Bale (1495-1563) was a famous playwright and once the bishop of Ossory.

<sup>6</sup> Wylley was a clergyman.

Year	Author	Title	Type	Known Auspices	Memo
	Bale, John	'John Baptist's Preaching in the Wilderness' (De Predicatione Ioannis')	Anti-Catholic Mystery	St. Stephen's, Canterbury	
	Bale, John	'I & II King John' ('De Ioanne Anglorum Rege')	Anti-Catholic History	St. Stephen's, Canterbury	
	Bale, John	'The Knaveries of Thomas Becket' (De Imposturiis Thomas Becketi)*	Anti-Catholic History	---	
	Bale, John	'I, II, III, & IV Pammachii' (Adapt. Kirchmayer's 'Pammachius')*	Anti-Catholic Neo-moral	Closet (?)	
	Bale, John	'The Temptation of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by Satan' ('De Christi Tentatione')	Anti-Catholic Mystery	St. Stephen's, Canterbury	
	Bale, John	'Three Laws of Nature, Moses, and Christ, Corrupted by the Sodomites, Pharisees, and Papists' ('Corruptiones Legum Divinarum')	Anti-Catholic Moral	St. Stephen's, Canterbury	
1539	Spencer, --- <sup>7</sup>	'The Sacrament of the Altar'*	Anti-Catholic Moral	---	
1540	Buchanan, George <sup>8</sup>	'Baptistes sive Calumnia' (Probably same as 'John Baptist' acted at Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1562-3)	Latin Political Allegory	Guyenne College, Bordeaux	
	Lindsay, David <sup>9</sup>	'A Satire of the Three Estates'	Political-Religious Moral	Before James V at Linlithgow (Version I) Castle Hill, Cupar, Fifeshire (Version II) Calton Hill, Edinburgh (Version III)	
	Wedderburn, James <sup>10</sup>	'The Beheading of John the Baptist'*	Anti-Catholic Tragedy	Playfield, Dundee	
	Wedderburn, James	'Dionysius the Tyrant'*	Anti-Catholic	Playfield, Dundee	

<sup>7</sup> Spencer was a priest, turned actor.

<sup>8</sup> Buchanan (1506-82) was a scholar.

<sup>9</sup> Sir David Lindsay was a poet.

<sup>10</sup> Wedderburn (1495?-1553) was a merchant.

Year	Author	Title	Type	Known Auspices	Memo
1541	Anon.	'An Interlude wherein Priests were Railed On and Called Knaves'*	Tragedy Anti-Catholic Interlude	Shoreditch	
1546	Radcliffe, Ralph <sup>11</sup>	'De Ioannis Huss Bohemie Noti Condemnatione'; 'De Iona a Deo ad Niniuitas Afflictionibus'; 'De Iona a Deo ad Niniuitas Ablegati Defectione'; 'De Iudith Bethuliensis Incredibili Fortitudine'; 'De Lazaro a Diuitiis aedibus Abacto'; 'De Sodomio et Gomorre Incendio'; 'De Susanne per Iudices Iniquos ob Lese Pudicitie Notam Diuini Liberatione'*	(Latin) plays possibly anti-Catholic	Radcliffe's School at Hitchin	
1548	Edward VI	'De Meretrice Babylonica' ('The Whore of Babylon')*	Anti-Catholic Interlude	---	
1550	Hoby, Thomas (Sir) <sup>12</sup>	'Free-Will' (Trans. Bassano's 'Tragedia del libero arbitrio')*	Anti-Catholic Moral	---	
	Wever, R.	'Lusty Juventus'	Anti-Catholic Moral Interlude	---	Offered for acting
	Anon.	'Somebody, Avarice, and Minister' ('Somebody and Others, or The Spoiling of Lady Verity')	Anti-Catholic Moral Interlude	---	
1552	Anon.	'Aesop's Crow'*	Anti-Catholic Interlude	Court Interluders	For Christmas, 1552-3
1553	Anon. (Udall, N.?) <sup>13</sup>	'Respublica'	Anti-Protestant Moral Interlude	Boys, at Christmas, London	
1559	Wager, W.	'The Longer Thou Lives the More Fool Thou Art'	Protestant Moral	---	Offered for acting
	Anon.	'Papists'*	Anti-Catholic	Court-Interluders	

<sup>11</sup> Radcliffe (1519?-1559) was a schoolmaster.

<sup>12</sup> Thomas Hoby (1530-66) was a diplomat.

<sup>13</sup> Greg Walker believes that the play was written by Nicholas Udall. See his *The Politics of Performance in Early Renaissance Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), ch.5.

Year	Author	Title	Type	Known Auspices	Memo
			Farce		
1560	Wager, W.	'Enough Is as Good as a Feast'	Protestant Moral	---	Offered for acting
1561	Anon.	'The Pedlar's Prophecy'	Protestant Moral	---	
1564	Anon.	'Mock Mass'*	Anti-Catholic Burlesque	Cambridge students at Hinchinbrook	
1565	Anon.	'King Darius'	Protestant Moral	---	Offered for acting
1571	Davidson, John <sup>14</sup>	'The Seige of Edinburgh Castle'*	Polemical Show	St Leonard's College, St Andrews	
	Anon.	'New Custom' ('Nugize', i.e. 'New Guise')	Protestant Moral	---	Offered for acting
1572	Woodes, Nathaniel <sup>15</sup>	'The Conflict of Conscience'	Protestant Moral	---	Offered for acting
1574	Anon.	'An Interlude of Minds' (Trnas. From Niciaes's 'Ein Gedicht des Spels van Sinnes')	Protestant Moral	Closet	

\*Play text lost

<sup>14</sup> Davidson (1549?-1603) was Regent of St Leonard's, St Andrews).

<sup>15</sup> Woodes (born c.1550?) was a Norwich clergyman.

## Appendix 4: Greater Noble Companies, 1530-80

Patron's Title	Patron's Name	County No.	Entry No.	Average Payments (pence)
Abergavenny	Henry Nevill (1527-86/7)	7	11	80
Arundel (1)	(1) Thomas Fitz Alan (or Mautravers) (1450- 1524) (2) William Fitz Alan (c.1476-1543/4)	3	39	36
Arundel (2)	Henry Fitz Alan, as earl of Arundel (1544-80)	2	5	84
Audley/Lord Chancellor/ Audley (Lady)	(1) Thomas Audley (c.1488-1544) (2) Elizabeth, wife of Thomas, Baron Audley <sup>1</sup>	4	5	115
Bath (1)	(1) John Bourchier (1470-1539) (2) John Bourchier (c.1499-1560/1)	3	7	55
Bath (2)	William Bourchier (1557-1623)	8	10	119
Beauchamp/ Hertford*	(1) Edward Seymour, Sir (1537-1621) (2) Edward Seymour, Sir (1537-1621) or Edward Seymour (1561-1612)*	10	25	168
Berkeley (2)	Richard Berkeley, Sir (c. 1531-1604/5)	3	4	106
Berkeley <sup>2</sup> (3)	Henry Berkeley (1534-1613)	15	56	106
Bridgwater	Henry Daubeney (1493-1548)	3	5	67
Byron <sup>3</sup>	(1) John Byron, Sir (2) John Byron, son of John Byron (d.1567)	2	2	60
Chandos (1)	Edmund Brydges (by 1520-72/3)	2	2	58
Chandos (2)*	(1) Giles Brydges (c.1548-93/4)	13	53	113

<sup>1</sup> As Lady Elizabeth was the wife of Baron Thomas Audley, it is very possible that the same company continued to perform under the mistress's title.

<sup>2</sup> Murray argued that the company should be divided into two, as the first one ceased to appear by 1556-7 (my record: 1568), and the next record appear in 1577-8. Think about whether to accept his way of division or not.

<sup>3</sup> As the Byrons were father and son, it is very possible that the two entries belonged to the same company.

Patron's Title	Patron's Name	County No.	Entry No.	Average Payments (pence)
	(2) William Brydges (aft.1548-1602) (3) Grey Brydges (c.1579-1621)			
Clinton/Lincoln (1) <sup>4</sup>	(1) Edward Clinton (or Fiennes) (1512-84/5) (2) Thomas Clinton (d. 1618) <sup>5</sup>	4	6	115
Clinton/Lincoln (2)*	Henry Clinton or Fiennes (aft.1539-1616)	6	13	175
Compton	Henry Compton (1544-89)	5	8	134
Cromwell/Bale	(1) Thomas Cromwell (ca.1485-1540) (2) John Bale	6	10	164
Darcy* <sup>6</sup>	John Darcy (c.1530-1602)	10	26	142
De la Warr	William West (c.1519-95)	3	3	93
Derby (1) <sup>7</sup>	Edward Stanley (1509-72)	9	10	85
Derby (2) <sup>8</sup>	Henry Stanley (1531-93)	16	47	132
Dorset	Henry Grey (1517-54)	6	11	91
Dudley (2)	Edward Sutton (bef.1536-by 1586)	6	6	113
Essex (1)	Henry Bouchier (c.1472-1540)	2	5	68
Essex (2) <sup>9</sup>	(1) Walter Devereux (1539-76) (2) Lettice Knollys (1539/40-1634) <sup>10</sup> (3) Robert Devereux (1566-1600/1)	21	106	138

<sup>4</sup> The company was sometimes known as Lord Admiral's company as Edward held the post between 1558-85. Murray, I., p.299.

<sup>5</sup> The company possibly passed under Herny's patronage before 1574. See Murray, I., p.299.

<sup>6</sup> Murray divided the records of Darcy's players into two companies. John Darcy could be two persons, father (as Lord Darcy, 1557-87) and son (as Lord Darcy, 1587-1635). Try to check again either DNB or The Complete Peerage. See Murray, II., p.37. The entries of this company belong mainly to post-1580 period.

<sup>7</sup> Murray pointed out that the first payment to the Derby's players was a payment of 6s 8d made by the Shrewsbury authorities to 'the Earl of Derby's players' (Devlin, Helps to Hereford History, p.71). At that time, Thomas Stanley was the Earl. Check it out. See Murray, II., p.39, n.1.

<sup>8</sup> The company was known as Lord Strange's company between 1531-72, before Henry succeeded as earl of Derby. Murray, I., p.291.

Patron's Title	Patron's Name	County No.	Entry No.	Average Payments (pence)
FitzJames	James FitzJames (c.1520-79), Sir	3	5	140
Fortescue (1)	(1) Henry Fortescue (by 1515-76) (2) Henry Fortescue (by 1515-76) or Richard Fortescue (by 1517-1570), or John Fortescue (1533-1607)* (3) Richard Fortescue (by 1517-70)	4	12	81
Fortescue (3)	William Fortescue, Sir	2	2	78
Gray (1)	Patrick Gray (d.1541)	2	2	50
Harte	Percival Harte (d.1580)	2	2	80
Hopton (2)	Owen Hopton (c. 1519-95), Sir	2	3	107
Hunsdon <sup>11</sup>	Henry Carey (1525.6-96)	14	?	---
Kinderton	Thomas Venables (by 1513-80)	2	2	100
Latimer	John Nevill (c.1519/20-77)	3	4	76
Leicester	Robert Dudley, (1532 or 1533-88)	24	187	182
Lord Admiral (2)	Thomas Seymour (c1508-1548/9)	3	5	51
Lord Admiral (3)*	Charles Howard (c.1536-1624)	18	83	186

<sup>9</sup> When Walter died in 1576, Robert, the new earl, was only nine, so the company was under the patronage of both the earl and his mother (and therefore sometimes known as Countess of Essex's players as well). See Murray, I., p.311.

<sup>10</sup> Lettice married Robert Dudley, on 21 Sept. 1578. But the company kept using the title 'countess of Essex's players' till c.1580. See Murray, I., pp.311-2.

<sup>11</sup> For more about this 'old Hunsdon's company' see Murray, I., pp.319-21, also II., p.50.

Patron's Title	Patron's Name	County No.	Entry No.	Average Payments (pence)
Lord Warden	(1) Edward Guildford, Sir (as L.W. till 1534) (2) Either (3) George Boleyn (d.1535) (1)Arthur Plantagenet <sup>12</sup> (5) Either (6) Thomas Cheney, Sir, (Cheyne or Cheyney), (L. W., 1542-58) (7) William Brooke (1527-96/7)	4	36	82
Lord Warden/ Lord Lisle <sup>13</sup>	Arthur Plantagenet (c.1480-1541/2)	6	27	66
Montagu	Anthony Browne (1528-92)	4	5	64
Monteagle-Morley <sup>14</sup>	(1) William Stanley (c.1527-81) (2) Edward Parker (c.1551-1618)	6	50	114
Mountjoy <sup>15</sup>	(1) James Blount (c.1533-81) (2) William Blount (c.1561-94) <sup>16</sup>	13	48	75
Norfolk (1)	Thomas Howard (1473-1554)	4	4	52
Norfolk (2)	Thomas Howard (1537/8-72)	6	10	111
Northampton	William Parr (1513-1571)	5	10	61
Northumberland/Lord Admiral	John Dudley (c.1504-53)	5	8	83
Ogle* <sup>17</sup>	Cuthbert Ogle (c.1540-97)	10	23	129
Oxford (1)	(1) John de Vere	15	36	90

<sup>12</sup> As Plantagenet's company existed before he became Lord Warden (known then as Lord Lisle's Men), I leave it as a separate company here.

<sup>13</sup> Arthur's company sometimes was under the title of Lord Lisle. G.E.C. and Books of Dignities, (1894), p.319, probably provide the name of Lord Wardens.

<sup>14</sup> William Stanley, Lord Monteagle, married his daughter and heiress, Elizabeth, to Edward Parker, Lord Morley. Murray pointed out that it's very possible that the Monteagle's company passed under Morley's patronage after William's death in 1581 (as the first appearance of Morley's company is in 1581). See, Murray, II., pp.54-5.

<sup>15</sup> Murray mentioned a Charles Blount, Lord Mountjoy, whose players visited Plymouth in 1598-9. Try to check this out. See, Murray, II., pp.58-9.

<sup>16</sup> The company passed under the patronage of William Blount, son and heir of James, when the latter died in 1581. See Murray, II, p.57.

<sup>17</sup> Entries of this company are mainly of the post-1580 period.



Patron's Title	Patron's Name	County No.	Entry No.	Average Payments (pence)
	(c.1516-62) (2) Either (3) Edward de Vere (1550-1604) <sup>18</sup>			
Oxford (2)*	Edward de Vere (1550-1604)	18	49	149
Pembroke* <sup>19</sup>	Henry Herbert (aft.1538-1601)	14	31	214
Rich	(1) Richard Rich, (pro.1496/7-1567) (2) Robert Rich (c.1537-1580/1)	7	18	108
Richmond	Henry Fitzroy (c.1519-36)	4	5	56
Russell/Bedford/Lord Admiral	Francis Russell (1527-85)	5	7	119
Russell/Bedford/Lord Privy Seal	John Russell (c.1485-1554/5)	5	9	99
Saddle	Ralph Saddle, Sir	2	2	61
Scrope	Henry Scrope (c.1534-92)	3	3	63
Sheffield*	Edmund Sheffield (1565-1646)	9	20	96
Shrewsbury	(1) Francis Talbot (d.1582) <sup>20</sup> (2) George Talbot (1522-90)	4	5	122
Smith (1)	Francis Smith, Sir (by 1516-pro. 3 Sep. 1605) <sup>21</sup>	2	2	72
Somerset/Lord Protector	Edward Seymour (c.1500-51/2)	8	18	81
Stafford (2)*	Edward Stafford (1535/6-1603)	15	48	114

<sup>18</sup> According to Murray, the old Oxford's company passed immediately under the patronage of Edward, the new earl, after his father's death in 1562. But as Edward was then a boy of 13 and was a royal ward in the charge of Sir William Cecil, Master of the Court of Wards, who very possibly thought the maintenance of a company not necessary, the company very possibly disbanded or sought another patron (after 1564-5). The next entry of Oxford's company appeared in 1580, although under the same patron, Edward de Vere, was very possibly a new one. See Murray, II., pp.62-3.

<sup>19</sup> Entries of this company are mainly of the post-1580 period.

<sup>20</sup> Although I used to take Gilbert Talbot as the Lord Talbot, but according to Murray, Francis, the eldest son of George, was Lord Talbot between 1560-82. The company passed from the son's patronage to the father's. Check 'Lord Talbot'. See Murray, II., pp.66-7, 96.

<sup>21</sup> As we don't have the background of the Sir Francis Smith of Nottinghamshire's entry, we cannot be sure whether this Sir Francis is the same as the one of the Warwickshire entry. But as Warwick and Nottingham are on the same route, and the years continual, I suppose they are the same person.

Patron's Title	Patron's Name	County No.	Entry No.	Average Payments (pence)
Strange-Chamberlain <sup>22*</sup>	(1) Ferdinando Stanley (c.1559- 1594) (2) Alice Spence (countess of Derby, wife of Ferdinando) (3) Henry Carey (1525-6-96), Lord Hunsdon (Lord Chamberlain) George Carey, son of Henry, succ. As Lord Hunsdon and later Lord Chamberlain. (c.1556-1603)	13	37	164
Suffolk/Suffolk (duchess of)	(1) Charles Brandon (c.1484-1545) (2) Katherine Willoughby (1518/9-80) <sup>23</sup>	16	45	94
Sussex/ Chamberlain (2) <sup>24</sup>	(1) Thomas Radcliffe, (c.1525/6-83) (2) Henry Radcliffe (by 1533-93) <sup>25</sup> (3) (Countess of Sussex) Honor Pound of Drayton, in Farlington, Hants (d.1593) <sup>26</sup> (4) Robert Radcliffe (1573-1629) <sup>27</sup>	19	137	157
Sussex/Chamberlain (1)	(1) Robert Radcliffe (c.1483-1542) (2) Robert or Henry (3) Henry Radcliffe (c.1507-57)	9	22	53

<sup>22</sup> This company was shortly known as the earl of Derby's company, as Ferdinando succeeded his father as earl of Derby on 25 September 1593. But Ferdinando died on 16 April 1594.

<sup>23</sup> Although there are two possibilities for duchess of Suffolk after 1551, Katherine Willoughby or Frances Brandon, according to Murray, Katherine should be the one patron titled as duchess of Suffolk as both Francis and her husband seem to have patronised a company after 1551. See Murray, II., p.72.

<sup>24</sup> As Sussex was once Lord Chamberlain, the company was known as Lord Chamberlain's men between 13 July 1572 to 9 June 1583 (except a short interruption between c 24 April 1574 to c. 2 Feb. 1577). See Murray, I, p.301. Also E.K. Chambers, Elizabethan Lord Chamberlains (Malone Society Publicatio), I, pp.31-42; Complete Peerage, vii, p.336.

<sup>25</sup> When Thomas died in 1583, Murray, refuting Fleay's argument, asserts that the company passed under the patronage of his successor, Henry, the new earl of Sussex. See Murray, I., p.302.

<sup>26</sup> According to Chambers, the company performed under the title of 'countess of Sussex' in 1586-7. See his ES, II, p.94.

<sup>27</sup> The company passed under Robert's patronage soon after the death of Henry (Dec. 14). See Murray, I., p.302.

Patron's Title	Patron's Name	County No.	Entry No.	Average Payments (pence)
Warwick	Ambrose Dudley (c.1528-89/90)	14	32	131
Willoughby	William Willoughby (c.1515-30 July 1570)	3	3	72
Worcester	(1) William Somerset (c.1527-88/9) (2) Edward Somerset (c.1550-1627/8)	20	157	131

\* Behind the patron's title means the company is mainly of the post-1580 period.

## Appendix 5: Regional Companies

### (1) Local Companies, 1530-80

Town Origin	County Origin	Total Entry No.1
Barwick	---	1
Bollyng-booke	---	1
Boreham	Essex?	1
Bristol	Gloucestershire	4
Brookland	Kent	25
Cambridge	Cambridgeshire	1
Canterbury	Kent	13
Carlisle	Cumberland	2
Cleeve Prior	Worcestershire	1
---	Cornwall	1
Coventry	Warwickshire	7
Cropwell	---	1
Cuplande <sup>2</sup>	Cumberland	1
Derby	Derbyshire	2
---	Derbyshire	1
Doncaster	Yorkshire	1
Elham	Kent	5
---	Essex	8
Exeter	Devon	1
Eye	Suffolk	2
Folkestone	Kent	4
Fornes Sells <sup>3</sup>	Yorkshire	2
Frampton	Lincolnshire	2
Galtres (North Riding)	Yorkshire	1
Hadley	Kent?	1
Hasting	Sussex	2
Howden	---	1
Hull (East Riding)	Yorkshire	3
Hythe	Kent	6
---	Italy	1
Ivychurch	Kent	4
Kendal	Westmorland	1
---	Lancashire	2
Lancaster	Lancashire	1
Leeds (West Riding)	Yorkshire	1
Lincoln	Lincolnshire	2
---	Lincolnshire	2
Liskeard	Cornwall	1
London	---	3
Long Preston (West Riding)	Yorkshire	1
Lydd	Kent	23
Magun <sup>4</sup>	Yorkshire	1

<sup>1</sup> The entry numbers here are those belong to the company all together (some of them may extend to years beyond our period).

<sup>2</sup> Probably Copeland.

<sup>3</sup> Possibly Furnace Hill, West Riding.

Millbrook	Hampshire?	1
Mylton <sup>5</sup>	---	1
Mounsorell	---	1
---	Norfolk	1
Norwich	Norfolk	1
Ombersley	Worcestershire	1
Otley (West Riding)	Yorkshire	1
Pilton,	Devon or Somerset	2
Richmond	---	1
Richmond, North Riding	Yorkshire	1
Rochester	Kent	4
Romney	Kent	20
Selson	---	1
Sherbourne	Dorset	1
Shrewsbury	Shropshire	2
St. Denys	Hampshire	1
Stoke by Nayland	Suffolk	4
Syelbe	---	1
Tavistock	Devon	1
Tawton	Devon	2
Totnes	Devon	7
---	Wales	1
Wallealbe <sup>6</sup>	Yorkshire	1
Walsoken	Norfolk	1
Walton le Dale	Lancashire	1
Wattellyngton	---	1
Whaplode	Lincolnshire	2
Whitby	---	2
---	Wiltshire	1
Windsor	Berkshire	1
Withern	Lincolnshire	1
Worcester	Worcestershire	2
Wrexham	Shropshire	1
Wysbyche	---	1
York	Yorkshire	3

## (2) Regional Noble Companies, 1530-80

Patron's Title	Patron's Name	County	Total Entry No.	Average Payments (pence)
Babthorpe	William Babthorpe, Sir	Yorkshire	1	12
Bartlett	Richard Bartlatte, Sir	Hampshire	1	120
Becon	John Becon, Sir	Suffolk	1	80
Berkeley (1)	Mr Henry Berkeley (c.1547-1601)	Somerset	2	132
Berners	John Bouchier (1467-1533)	Kent	1	10

<sup>4</sup> Possibly Mag Wood, Meagill, Meg Gate, Mongo, or Mug Mill, all in the West Riding.

<sup>5</sup> Probably Milton Abbey.

<sup>6</sup> Probably Willerby, East Riding.

Patron's Title	Patron's Name	County	Total Entry No.	Average Payments (pence)
Beryn	John Beryn, Sir	Leicester-shire	2	54
Bray	Edward Bray (by 1492-c.1558 ) or John Bray (?-1557)* <sup>7</sup>	Norfolk	1	80
Bray	Edward Bray (by 1492-c.1558 )	Shropshire	1	80
Brydges	John Brydges, Sir (1491/2-1557)	Shropshire	1	48
Canterbury (archbishop of)	Matthew Parker (as archbishop 1559-75)	Sussex	1	120
Cartley	Thomas Cartley, Sir	Devon	1	120
Cayne	Sir Henry Cheyne (1540-87)	Devon	1	80
Clifton	Gervase Clifton (1516-88)	Nottinghamshire	1	12
Cobham (2)	George (Brooke) (1497-1558)	London	1	240
Comptroller	James Croft <sup>8</sup> (1517/8-90)	Gloucester-shire	1	40
Cripe	Mr Cripe	Kent	1	20
Dacre	Gregory Fiennes (d. 1594)	Yorkshire	1	160
Denny	Mr Denny	Suffolk	1	80
Dudley (1)	John Sutton or Dudley (c.1495-1553)	Derbyshire	1	240
Edgecombe	Peter Edgecombe, (c.1536-1608)	Devon	2	180
Exeter	N/I	Yorkshire	1	54
Exeter (bishop of)	(1) James Turberville (c.1495-1559) or William Alley, (c.1510-70)* (2) William Alley (1510-70)	Devon	3	107
Finch	Mr Finch	Kent	4	30
Fortescue (2)	Andrew Fortescue, Sir	Gloucester-shire	1	48
Fortescue (4)	Fortescue, Sir	Suffolk	1	80
Fortescue (5)	Mr Fortescue	Gloucester-shire	1	120
Foscuis	John Foscuis, Sir	Hampshire	1	96
Frend	George Frend	Essex	1	240
Gray (2)	Patrick Gray (d.1584)	Kent	1	40
Hales	John Hales (by 1516-72)	Gloucester-shire	1	80
Hastings	Edward Hastings, as Lord Hastings 1558-72. <sup>9</sup>	Leicester-shire	1	48

<sup>7</sup> Lancashire put this record under the name of Edward Braye. Check with REED, Norwich.

<sup>8</sup> According to Murray, the name is 'James Crofts'. Check it out.

<sup>9</sup> According to Murray, Sir Edward Hastings was a zealous Roman Catholic and was imprisoned in the Tower in 1561 for hearing Mass. See Murray, II., p.86.

Patron's Title	Patron's Name	County	Total Entry No.	Average Payments (pence)
Hening	Thomas Henneage (c. by 1553), or John Henneage (d. by 1558), or Robert Henneage (d. by 1557)*	Gloucester-shire	1	60
Hibbatt	Mr Hibbatt	Leicester-shire	1	30
Hopton (1)	Ralph Hopton (c. 1510-71)	Gloucester-shire	1	80
Howard (1)	Thomas Howard (c.1520-81/2)	Nottingham-shire	1	60
Kingston	Anthony Kingston (by 1512-1556)	Gloucester-shire	3	87
Lane	Robert Lane (1527-c.1588) <sup>10</sup>	Gloucester-shire	1	120
Lee (1)	Robert Lee, Sir	Buckinghamshire	1	16
Lee (2)	Henry Lee, Sir	Yorkshire	1	60
Lord Admiral (1)	N/I	Dorset	1	80
Lord President	N/I <sup>11</sup>	Derbyshire	2	---
Lord Treasurer	William Paulet (by c.1483-1571/2)	Cambridge-shire	1	40
Lord Visitor	Richard Ingworth (d.1544)	Shropshire	1	264
Lumley	John Lumley (c.1533-1609)	Cambridge-shire	1	120
Luxborough	N/I	Yorkshire	2	60
Marcham	Mr Marcham	Nottingham-shire	1	24
Master of the Revels	Thomas Beniar, Sir	Kent	2	144
Mountjoy (lady)	Katherine Leigh (nd-1576) <sup>12</sup>	Gloucester-shire	1	120
Neville	Thomas Neville (bet 1525 and 1549, and d. by 1568) or Thomas Neville (1501-1569/71)*	Dorset	1	26
Norfolk (3)	John Norfolk, Sir	Kent	1	24
Parker	Henry Parker, Sir (d.1551) <sup>13</sup>	Leicester-shire	1	20
Pickering	William Pickering, Sir	Essex	2	36
Ratcliff	Humphry Ratcliff, Sir	Leicester-shire	1	48
Richardson	Mr Richardson	Yorkshire	2	34
Rochford	N/I <sup>14</sup>	Kent	1	20

<sup>10</sup> Sir Robert Lance was a Northamptonshire landowner. Gurr, p.170.

<sup>11</sup> The payments of Lord President are not counted for (1) we cannot identify who the president is, (2) the two payments are extremely high—100s each. The second one is for three plays.

<sup>12</sup> Lord Mountjoy, James Blount, had his own playing company which had performed in Gloucestershire in 1572-3. Could try to find out the relationship between Lady Mountjoy and Lord Mountjoy.

<sup>13</sup> Sir Henry Parker was the eldest son of Henry Parker, Lord Morley. He died before his father. Murray, II., p.91.

Patron's Title	Patron's Name	County	Total Entry No.	Average Payments (pence)
Rogers	Richard Rogers (c.1527-1605)	Somerset	1	72
Sampall	Mr Sampall	Yorkshire	1	30
Scott	Mr Scott	Suffolk	1	120
Sheriff	Mr Sheriff	Kent	1	6
Skaith	N/I	Yorkshire	1	120
Skipwith (1)	William Skipwith, Sir	Yorkshire	1	30
Skipwith (2)	Thomas Skipwith, Sir	Yorkshire	1	24
Smith (2)	Mr Smith	Leicester-shire	2	30
Smith (3)	Mr Smith	Berkshire	1	36
Somerset	George Somerset, Sir	Kent	1	20
Southampton	Henry Wriothesley (1545-81)	Suffolk	1	160
Stafford (1)	Henry Stafford (1501-63)	Shropshire	1	40
Stanhope	Thomas Stanhope, Sir (c.1540-96)	Nottingham-shire	1	24
Stapleton	Richard Stapleton, Sir	Nottingham-shire	1	40
Strepworthy	William Strepworthy, Sir	Kent	1	24
Sturley	Anthony Sturley, Sir	Leicester-shire	1	35
Tewke	Mr Tewk, high sheriff of Essex	Suffolk	1	40
Tock	Mr Tock	Kent	1	72
Triplyn	Thomas Triplyn	Devon	1	30
Wakewyd	N/I	Yorkshire	1	120
Wenman	Thomas Wenman (c.1548-77) of Twyford, Buckingham-shire, or his son Sir Richard Wenman*	Berkshire	1	12
Wentworth	Thomas Wentworth (1501-50/1)	Gloucester-shire	1	81
Weyneman	Richard Weyneman, Sir	Nottingham-shire	1	24
Windsor	Andrew or Andrews Windsor (1467-1543)	Buckinghamshire	1	16
Wynswordes	N/I	Dorset	1	48

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<sup>14</sup> As there was no Lord Rochford after Sir Thomas Boleyn's death (Viscount Rochford, earl of Wiltshire) in 1539, Murray argued that the patron of this company could be one of the Boleyns, who had no right to the title, or was the company of Sir Thomas Boleyn continuing to use his title after his death. See Murray, II, p.93.



## Appendix 6: The Touring of Major Acting Companies

### (1) The Earl of Derby's Players

Year	Patron's Name	County	Location
1531-2	Edward Stanley	Essex	Dunmow
1531-2	Edward Stanley	Yorkshire	Selby Abbey
1532-3	Edward Stanley	Cambridgeshire	Cambridge
1532-3	Edward Stanley	Durham	Durham Priory
1532-3	Edward Stanley	Gloucestershire	Bristol
1535-6	Edward Stanley	Cambridgeshire	Cambridge
1537-8	Edward Stanley	Leicestershire	Leicester
1540	Edward Stanley	Wiltshire	Wulfhall
1563-4	Henry Stanley	Hampshire	Southampton
1564-5	Henry Stanley	Gloucestershire	Bristol
1564-5	Henry Stanley	Gloucestershire	Gloucester
1564-5	Henry Stanley	Kent	Canterbury
1565	Henry Stanley	Essex	Chelmsford
1565	Henry Stanley	Essex	Maldon
1565-6	Henry Stanley	Cambridgeshire	Cambridge
1566	Edward Stanley	Northumberland	Newcastle-upon-Tyne
1566	Henry Stanley	Yorkshire	Beverley
1566-7	Henry Stanley	Suffolk	Ipswich
1568-9	Henry Stanley	Kent	Canterbury
1568-9	Henry Stanley	Kent	Dover
1568-9	Edward Stanley	Kent	New Romney
1569-70	Henry Stanley	Devon	Plymouth
1569-70	Henry Stanley	Gloucestershire	Bristol
1569-70	Henry Stanley	Kent	Lydd
1569-70	Henry Stanley	Kent	New Romney
1573-4	Henry Stanley	Warwickshire	Coventry
1576	Henry Stanley	Northumberland	Newcastle-upon-Tyne
1576-7	Ferdinando Stanley	Devon	Exeter
1576-7	Henry Stanley	Suffolk	Ipswich
1576-7	Ferdinando Stanley	Suffolk	Ipswich
1577-8	Henry Stanley	Kent	Dover
1577-8	Henry Stanley	Kent	Faversham
1577-8	Ferdinando Stanley	Kent	Faversham
1577-8	Henry Stanley	Nottinghamshire	Nottingham
1577-8	Henry Stanley	Warwickshire	Coventry
1578-9	Henry Stanley	Gloucestershire	Bristol
1578-9	Henry Stanley	Hampshire	Southampton
1578-9	Ferdinando Stanley	Nottinghamshire	Nottingham
1578-9	Ferdinando Stanley	Somerset	Bath
1578-9	Henry Stanley	Somerset	Bath
1578-9	Ferdinando Stanley	Warwickshire	Coventry
1578-9	Henry Stanley	Warwickshire	Straford-upon-Avon

1579-80	Henry Stanley	Devon	Dartmouth
1579-80	Henry Stanley	Devon	Exeter
1579-80	Henry Stanley	Gloucestershire	Gloucester
1579-80	Henry Stanley	Kent	Faversham
1579-80	Henry Stanley	Leicestershire	Leicester
1579-80	Henry Stanley	Nottinghamshire	Nottingham
1579-80	Henry Stanley	Warwickshire	Coventry
1579-80	Henry Stanley	Warwickshire	Straford-upon-Avon
1580-1	Henry Stanley	Berkshire	Abingdon
1580-1	Henry Stanley	Devon	Exeter
1580-1	Ferdinando Stanley	Gloucestershire	Bristol
1580-1	Ferdinando Stanley	Gloucestershire	Bristol
1580-1	Ferdinando Stanley	Gloucestershire	Gloucester
1580-1	Ferdinando Stanley	Kent	Canterbury
1580-1	Ferdinando Stanley	Kent	Lydd
1580-1	Henry Stanley	Leicestershire	Leicester
1580-1	Henry Stanley	Nottinghamshire	Nottingham
1580-1	Henry Stanley	Somerset	Bath
1580-1	Ferdinando Stanley	Somerset	Bath
1580-1	Ferdinando Stanley	Sussex	Rye
1581-2	Ferdinando Stanley	Devon	Plymouth
1581-2	Henry Stanley	Norfolk	Norwich
1581-2	Ferdinando Stanley	Nottinghamshire	Nottingham
1581-2	Henry Stanley	Nottinghamshire	Nottingham
1581-2	Henry Stanley	Suffolk	Ipswich
1582-3	Henry Stanley	Hampshire	Southampton
1582-3	Henry Stanley	Lancashire	Liverpool
1582-3	Henry Stanley	Leicestershire	Leicester
1582-3	Henry Stanley	Somerset	Bath
1583-4	Ferdinando Stanley	Devon	Barnstaple
1584-5	Ferdinando Stanley	Yorkshire	Beverley
1587-8	Ferdinando Stanley	Warwickshire	Coventry
1591-2	Ferdinando Stanley	Cambridgeshire	Cambridge
1591-2	Ferdinando Stanley	Gloucestershire	Bristol
1591-2	Ferdinando Stanley	Gloucestershire	Gloucester
1591-2	Ferdinando Stanley	Kent	Canterbury
1591-2	Ferdinando Stanley	Kent	Faversham
1591-2	Ferdinando Stanley	Kent	Folkestone
1591-2	Ferdinando Stanley	Somerset	Bath
1591-2	Henry Stanley	Suffolk	Ipswich
1591-2	Ferdinando Stanley	Sussex	Rye
1591-2	Ferdinando Stanley	Warwickshire	Coventry
1592-3	Ferdinando Stanley	Gloucestershire	Bristol
1592-3	Ferdinando Stanley	Kent	Faversham
1592-3	Ferdinando Stanley	Kent	Maidstone
1592-3	Ferdinando Stanley	Oxfordshire	Oxford
1592-3	Ferdinando Stanley	Shropshire	Shrewsbury

1592-3	Ferdinando Stanley	Somerset	Bath
1593-4	Ferdinando Stanley	Hampshire	Southampton
1593-4	Ferdinando Stanley	Leicestershire	Leicester
1593-4	Ferdinando Stanley	Norfolk	Norwich
1593-4	Ferdinando Stanley	Suffolk	Ipswich
1593-4	Ferdinando Stanley	Warwickshire	Coventry
1594	Alice Spencer	Hampshire	Winchester
1595-6	William Stanley	Gloucestershire	Bristol
1595-6	William Stanley	Gloucestershire	Gloucester
1595-6	William Stanley	Kent	Canterbury
1595-6	William Stanley	Oxfordshire	Oxford
1595-6	William Stanley	Somerset	Bath
1595-6	William Stanley	Warwickshire	Coventry
1596	William Stanley	Yorkshire	York
1596-7	William Stanley	Gloucestershire	Bristol
1596-7	William Stanley	Leicestershire	Leicester
1596-7	William Stanley	Somerset	Bath
1596-7	William Stanley	Suffolk	Ipswich
1596-7	William Stanley	Warwickshire	Coventry
1597	William Stanley	Essex	Chelmsford
1597	William Stanley	Essex	Maldon
1597-8	William Stanley	Herefordshire	Leominster
1597-8	William Stanley	Leicestershire	Leicester
1597-8	William Stanley	Warwickshire	Coventry
1597-8	William Stanley	Westmorland	Kendal
1598	William Stanley	Yorkshire	Londesborough
1598	William Stanley	Yorkshire	Londesborough
1598	William Stanley	Yorkshire	Londesborough
1598-9	William Stanley	Leicestershire	Leicester
1599	William Stanley	Yorkshire	Londesborough
1599-1600	William Stanley	Leicestershire	Leicester
1599-1600	William Stanley	Leicestershire	Leicester
1601-2	William Stanley	Kent	Faversham
1601-2	William Stanley	Norfolk	Norwich
1601-2	William Stanley	Suffolk	Ipswich
1601-2	William Stanley	Warwickshire	Coventry
1602-3	William Stanley	Warwickshire	Coventry

## (2) Lord Warden's Players

Year	Patron	County	Location
1525-7	Arthur Plantagenet	Hampshire	Andover
1526-7	Arthur Plantagenet	Hampshire	Southampton
1529-30	Edward Gukldford	Hampshire	Southampton
1530-1	Arthur Plantagenet	Dorset	Poole
1531-2	Arthur Plantagenet	Kent	Lydd

1532-3	Arthur Plantagenet	Sussex	Rye
1532-3	Edward Gukldford	Sussex	Rye
1533-4	Edward Gukldford	Kent	Sandwich
1533-4	George Boleyn	Sussex	Rye
1534-5	Arthur Plantagenet	Kent	Dover
1535-6	Arthur Plantagenet	Kent	Dover
1535-6	George Boleyn	Kent	Dover
1535-6	George Boleyn	Kent	Lydd
1535-6	George Boleyn	Kent	New Romney
1535-6	George Boleyn	Sussex	Rye
1537-8	Arthur Plantagenet	Kent	Dover
1537-8	Arthur Plantagenet	Kent	Dover
1537-8	Arthur Plantagenet	Kent	Lydd
1537-8	Arthur Plantagenet	Kent	Sandwich
1537-8	Arthur Plantagenet	Sussex	Rye
1538	Arthur Plantagenet	London	Cromwell's Household
1538-9	Arthur Plantagenet	Kent	Lydd
1538-9	Arthur Plantagenet	Kent	New Romney
1538-9	Arthur Plantagenet	Kent	New Romney
1538-9	Arthur Plantagenet	Kent	Sandwich
1538-9	Arthur Plantagenet	Kent	Sandwich
1538-9	Arthur Plantagenet	Sussex	Rye
1539-40	Arthur Plantagenet	Gloucestershire	Bristol
1539-40	Arthur Plantagenet	Kent	Dover
1539-40	Arthur Plantagenet	Kent	Dover
1539-40	Arthur Plantagenet	Kent	Faversham
1539-40	Arthur Plantagenet	Kent	Lydd
1539-40	Arthur Plantagenet	Kent	New Romney
1539-40	Arthur Plantagenet	Kent	New Romney
1539-40	Arthur Plantagenet	Sussex	Rye
1541-2	Arthur Plantagenet	Kent	Dover
1541-2	Arthur Plantagenet	Kent	Folkestone
1541-2	Arthur Plantagenet	Kent	Lydd
1541-2	Arthur Plantagenet	Sussex	Rye
1542-3	Thomas Cheney	Kent	Canterbury
1542-3	Thomas Cheney	Kent	Dover
1542-3	Thomas Cheney	Kent	Folkestone
1542-3	Thomas Cheney	Kent	New Romney
1542-3	Thomas Cheney	Sussex	Rye
1543-4	Thomas Cheney	Kent	Folkestone
1543-4	Thomas Cheney	Kent	Hythe
1543-4	Thomas Cheney	Sussex	Rye
1544-5	Thomas Cheney	Kent	New Romney
1545-6	Thomas Cheney	Kent	Dover
1549-50	Thomas Cheney	Kent	Sandwich
1563-4	William Brooke	Gloucestershire	Gloucester
1568-9	William Brooke	Kent	Folkestone

1569-70	William Brooke	Gloucestershire	Bristol
1569-70	William Brooke	Kent	Canterbury
1569-70	William Brooke	Kent	Dover
1569-70	William Brooke	Kent	Lydd
1569-70	William Brooke	Kent	New Romney
1569-70	William Brooke	Sussex	Rye
1570-1	William Brooke	Kent	Canterbury
1596-7	William Brooke	Kent	Dover
1596-7	William Brooke	Kent	Faversham
1596-7	William Brooke	Somerset	Bath
1596-7	William Brooke	Sussex	Rye

### **(3) Cromwell/Bale's Players**

<b>Year</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Location</b>
1536-7	Shropshire	Shrewsbury
1537-8	Cambridgeshire	Cambridge
1537-8	Kent	Canterbury
1537-8	Leicestershire	Leicester
1537-8	Shropshire	Ludlow
1537-8	Shropshire	Shrewsbury
1538-9	Kent	Canterbury
1539-40	Cambridgeshire	Cambridge
1540	Essex	Maldon
1540	Yorkshire	York

### **(4) The Duke and Duchess of Suffolk's Players**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Patron</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Location</b>
1522-3	Charles Brandon	Kent	Dover
1523-4	Charles Brandon	Kent	Dover
1524-5	Charles Brandon	Shropshire	Shrewsbury
1529-30	Charles Brandon	Hampshire	Southampton
1537-8	Charles Brandon	Cambridgeshire	Cambridge
1538	Charles Brandon	London	Cromwell's Household
1538-9	Charles Brandon	Cambridgeshire	Cambridge
1539-40	Charles Brandon	Kent	Lydd
1540	Charles Brandon	Yorkshire	York
1540-1	Charles Brandon	Kent	Dover
1540-1	Charles Brandon	Kent	Lydd
1540-1	Charles Brandon	Middlesex	Hampton Court
1540-1	Charles Brandon	Sussex	Rye
1541-2	Charles Brandon	Kent	Dover
1541-2	Charles Brandon	Kent	Folkestone
1541-2	Charles Brandon	Kent	Lydd
1541-2	Charles Brandon	Sussex	Rye
1543-4	Charles Brandon	Shropshire	Ludlow

1547-8	Katherine Willoughby	Kent	Canterbury
1548-9	Katherine Willoughby	Northamptonshire	Peterborough
1550-1	Katherine Willoughby	Lincolnshire	Long Sutton
1552-3	Katherine Willoughby	Kent	Dover
1552-3	Katherine Willoughby	Kent	Dover
1552-3	Katherine Willoughby	Sussex	Rye
1558-9	Katherine Willoughby	Norfolk	Norwich
1559-60	Katherine Willoughby	Kent	Dover
1560-1	Katherine Willoughby	Dorset	Lyme Regis
1560-1	Katherine Willoughby	Gloucestershire	Bristol
1560-1	Katherine Willoughby	Leicestershire	Leicester
1561-2	Katherine Willoughby	Cambridgeshire	Cambridge
1561-2	Katherine Willoughby	Hampshire	Southampton
1562	Katherine Willoughby	Essex	Maldon
1562	Katherine Willoughby	Northumberland	Newcastle-upon-Tyne
1562	Katherine Willoughby	Suffolk	Ipswich
1562	Katherine Willoughby	Yorkshire	Beverley
1562-3	Katherine Willoughby	Gloucestershire	Bristol
1562-3	Katherine Willoughby	Gloucestershire	Gloucester
1562-3	Katherine Willoughby	Kent	Canterbury
1562-3	Katherine Willoughby	Kent	Dover
1562-3	Katherine Willoughby	Suffolk	Ipswich
1562-3	Katherine Willoughby	Suffolk	Ipswich
1562-3	Katherine Willoughby	Yorkshire	Beverley
1564	Katherine Willoughby	Essex	Chelmsford
1564	Katherine Willoughby	Essex	Maldon
1564	Katherine Willoughby	Yorkshire	Beverley

#### (5) The Earl of Bedford's Players

<b>Year</b>	<b>Patron</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Location</b>
1540-1	John Russell	Devon	Plymouth
1540-1	John Russell	Gloucestershire	Bristol
1540-1	John Russell	Somerset	Bridgwater
1543-4	John Russell	Cambridgeshire	Cambridge
1546-7	John Russell	Devon	Barnstaple
1546-7	John Russell	Devon	Plymouth
1547-8	John Russell	Devon	Plymouth
1548-9	John Russell	Shropshire	Shrewsbury
1552	Francis Russell	Leicestershire	Belvoir Castle
1552-3	Francis Russell	Devon	Barnstaple
1552-3	Francis Russell	Shropshire	Shrewsbury
1557-8	Francis Russell	Devon	Exeter
1563-4	Francis Russell	Suffolk	Ipswich
1564	Francis Russell	Essex	Chelmsford
1564	Francis Russell	Essex	Maldon
1564	Francis Russell	Northumberland	Newcastle-upon-Tyne

**(6) The Earl of Leicester's Players**

<b>Year</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Locations</b>
1558-9	Norfolk	Norwich
1558-9	Oxfordshire	Oxford
1559-60	Devon	Dartmouth
1559-60	Devon	Plymouth
1559-60	Essex	Saffron Walden
1559-60	Gloucestershire	Bristol
1559-60	Kent	Canterbury
1559-60	Kent	Dover
1559-60	Somerset	Bridgwater
1560	Essex	Ingatestone Hall
1560-1	Cambridgeshire	Cambridge
1560-1	Gloucestershire	Gloucester
1560-1	Kent	Canterbury
1560-1	Kent	Dover
1560-1	Kent	Lydd
1560-1	Norfolk	Norwich
1560-1	Sussex	Rye
1561	Yorkshire	Beverley
1561-2	Cambridgeshire	Cambridge
1561-2	Gloucestershire	Bristol
1561-2	Gloucestershire	Gloucester
1561-2	Hampshire	Southampton
1561-2	Kent	Canterbury
1561-2	Kent	Dover
1561-2	Kent	Lydd
1561-2	Kent	New Romney
1561-2	Oxfordshire	Oxford
1562	Essex	Maldon
1562	Suffolk	Ipswich
1562-3	Suffolk	Ipswich
1563	Yorkshire	Beverley
1563-4	Kent	Canterbury
1563-4	Kent	Dover
1563-4	Kent	Lydd
1563-4	Leicestershire	Leicester
1563-4	Leicestershire	Leicester
1563-4	Norfolk	Norwich
1563-4	Suffolk	Ipswich
1563-4	Suffolk	Ipswich
1563-4	Suffolk	Ipswich
1563-4	Sussex	Rye
1563-4	Yorkshire	Beverley



1564	Essex	Chelmsford
1564	Essex	Maldon
1564	Yorkshire	Beverley
1564-5	Cambridgeshire	Cambridge
1564-5	Norfolk	Norwich
1564-5	Suffolk	Ipswich
1565	Essex	Chelmsford
1565	Essex	Maldon
1565-6	Norfolk	Norwich
1566-7	Kent	Canterbury
1568-9	Nottinghamshire	Nottingham
1569	Yorkshire	Beverley
1569-70	Berkshire	Abingdon
1569-70	Devon	Barnstaple
1569-70	Devon	Dartmouth
1569-70	Devon	Plymouth
1569-70	Devon	Totnes
1569-70	Dorset	Lyme Regis
1569-70	Dorset	Poole
1569-70	Gloucestershire	Bristol
1569-70	Gloucestershire	Gloucester
1569-70	Hampshire	Southampton
1569-70	Kent	Canterbury
1569-70	Kent	Dover
1569-70	Kent	Faversham
1569-70	Kent	Lydd
1569-70	Kent	New Romney
1569-70	Oxfordshire	Oxford
1569-70	Sussex	Rye
1570-1	Essex	Saffron Walden
1570-1	Gloucestershire	Gloucester
1570-1	Kent	Maidstone
1570-1	Leicestershire	Leicester
1570-1	Suffolk	Ipswich
1570-1	Suffolk	Ipswich
1571	Yorkshire	Beverley
1571-2	Cambridgeshire	Cambridge
1571-2	Leicestershire	Leicester
1571-2	Nottinghamshire	Nottingham
1572	Yorkshire	Beverley
1572-3	Shropshire	Ludlow
1572-3	Warwickshire	Straford-upon-Avon
1572-3	Yorkshire	Beverley
1573-4	Dorset	Lyme Regis
1573-4	Gloucestershire	Bristol
1573-4	Leicestershire	Leicester
1573-4	Nottinghamshire	Nottingham



1573-4	Oxfordshire	Oxford
1573-4	Suffolk	Ipswich
1573-4	Worcestershire	Bewdley
1574	Essex	Chelmsford
1574	Essex	Maldon
1574-5	Hampshire	Southampton
1574-5	Kent	Canterbury
1574-5	Kent	Canterbury
1574-5	Kent	Sandwich
1574-5	Warwickshire	Coventry
1574-5	Yorkshire	Doncaster
1575-6	Kent	New Romney
1575-6	Suffolk	Ipswich
1575-6	Sussex	Rye
1576-7	Devon	Exeter
1576-7	Hampshire	Southampton
1576-7	Kent	Canterbury
1576-7	Kent	Canterbury
1576-7	Kent	Faversham
1576-7	Suffolk	Ipswich
1576-7	Sussex	Rye
1576-7	Warwickshire	Straford-upon-Avon
1577-8	Devon	Exeter
1577-8	Dorset	Lyme Regis
1577-8	Gloucestershire	Bristol
1577-8	Kent	New Romney
1577-8	Norfolk	Norwich
1577-8	Somerset	Bath
1578	Essex	Chelmsford
1578	Essex	Maldon
1578	Surrey	Richmond
1578-9	Kent	Canterbury
1578-9	Kent	Canterbury
1578-9	Kent	Dover
1579-80	Cambridgeshire	Cambridge
1579-80	Kent	Faversham
1579-80	Kent	Fordwich
1579-80	Suffolk	Ipswich
1579-80	Warwickshire	Coventry
1580	Durham	Durham Cathedral
1580	Northumberland	Newcastle-upon-Tyne
1580-1	Kent	Fordwich
1580-1	Kent	New Romney
1580-1	Norfolk	Norwich
1581-2	Hampshire	Southampton
1581-2	Hampshire	Southampton
1581-2	Shropshire	Shrewsbury

1581-2	Suffolk	Ipswich
1581-2	Warwickshire	Coventry
1584-5	Gloucestershire	Gloucester
1584-5	Leicestershire	Leicester
1584-5	Norfolk	Norwich
1584-5	Suffolk	Ipswich
1584-5	Warwickshire	Coventry
1585-6	Berkshire	Abingdon
1585-6	Devon	Exeter
1585-6	Somerset	Bath
1586	Wiltshire	Marlborough
1586-7	Devon	Exeter
1586-7	Dorset	Lyme Regis
1586-7	Gloucestershire	Bristol
1586-7	Gloucestershire	Gloucester
1586-7	Hampshire	Southampton
1586-7	Kent	Canterbury
1586-7	Kent	Dover
1586-7	Kent	Fordwich
1586-7	Kent	Maidstone
1586-7	Lancashire	Lathom
1586-7	Leicestershire	Leicester
1586-7	Norfolk	Norwich
1586-7	Nottinghamshire	Nottingham
1586-7	Somerset	Bath
1586-7	Sussex	Rye
1586-7	Warwickshire	Coventry
1586-7	Warwickshire	Straford-upon-Avon
1587-8	Berkshire	Reading
1587-8	Devon	Exeter
1587-8	Devon	Plymouth
1587-8	Dorset	Lyme Regis
1587-8	Essex	Saffron Walden
1587-8	Gloucestershire	Bristol
1587-8	Gloucestershire	Gloucester
1587-8	Kent	Dover
1587-8	Kent	Faversham
1587-8	Kent	Folkestone
1587-8	Kent	Hythe
1587-8	Kent	Hythe
1587-8	Kent	Lydd
1587-8	Kent	New Romney
1587-8	Kent	New Romney
1587-8	Norfolk	Norwich
1587-8	Nottinghamshire	Nottingham
1587-8	Oxfordshire	Oxford
1587-8	Somerset	Bath

1587-8	Suffolk	Ipswich
1587-8	Sussex	Rye
1587-8	Warwickshire	Coventry
1588	Yorkshire	York

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